SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

O.P. GAUBA

Social and Political Philosophy

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Social and Political Philosophy

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Preface

Philosophy is the mother of all knowledge. It comprehends knowledge about the secrets of life, the universe, and beyond. It includes all categories of social, religious, artistic, scientific, mathematical and logical thought. It relies on empirical as well as transcendental sources of knowledge. Scientific knowledge is not opposed to philosophy; it is derived from philosophy itself. Philosophy provides us with the conjectures which serve as a starting point for our scientific inquiry; it embraces all the results of scientific investigation; and finally it includes the conjectures about what is yet beyond the reach of science. In short, philosophy offers the clue to all types of knowledge concerning nature, society and values.

Social and political philosophy covers that part of philosophy which seeks to make human life worth-living. It seeks to dispel superstition and fear arising out of ignorance and pave the way for progress. While moral philosophy enlightens us about the values of human life, political philosophy endeavours to translate those values into practical objectives of public policy. Without a sound political philosophy our knowledge of human values will remain an academic exercise without the prospects of their realization in actual life. While politics is concerned with the acquisition and use of power, political philosophy is intended to ensure the use of power in the public interest. Social philosophy largely indicates the sphere of application of public policy. Hence social and political philosophy should be treated as a single discipline although their scientific counterparts, *viz.* sociology and political science could be identified as separate disciplines.

The present essay on *Social and Political Philosophy* is intended to be a short introduction to the problems of social and political philosophy in the contemporary world. Its major contents include nature and scope of social and political philosophy, scientific temper and progress, concept of sovereignty, individual and the state (including the concept of human rights, accountability and the curse of corruption), concepts of democracy, liberty, equality, justice, humanism and secularism, crime and punishment, principles of socialism and Marxism, gender perspective, ecological perspective and Gandhian perspective. Attempt has been made to examine the relevant issues in a global perspective rather than confining oneself to the Western perspective. Special effort has been made to introduce the relevant contribution of Indian social and political thought in various contexts. So

apart from the references to Western thought and institutions, frequent references will be found here to the thought of Kautilya, Vivekanand, Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore, Ambedkar, Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, M.N. Roy, Amartya Sen and other Indian thinkers as well as to the Indian Constitution.

I have tried to make this work reader-friendly in order to explode the myth that philosophy is an obscure subject. Language has been kept as simple as possible without diluting its content. Intricate concepts are elucidated through suitable headings and sub-headings, explanatory diagrammes, flow charts and comparative charts. One-the-spot definitions of important terms, a brief description of historical references and some crisp quotations are given in boxes.

This new edition represents a substantially improved version of all previous editions of my *Social and Political Philosophy*. All parts of the book have been thoroughly read and revised, and reset to make it more reader-friendly and richer in content. Relevant data have been updated, and many new arguments have been introduced and examined in the relevant contexts. It is hoped that this new edition of the book will prove to be more useful and acceptable to the academic community.

Constructive suggestions will be most welcome. Please e-mail your valuable suggestions to *ompgauba@gmail.com*

New Delhi **O.P. Gauba**

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1

Nature of Social and Political Philosophy

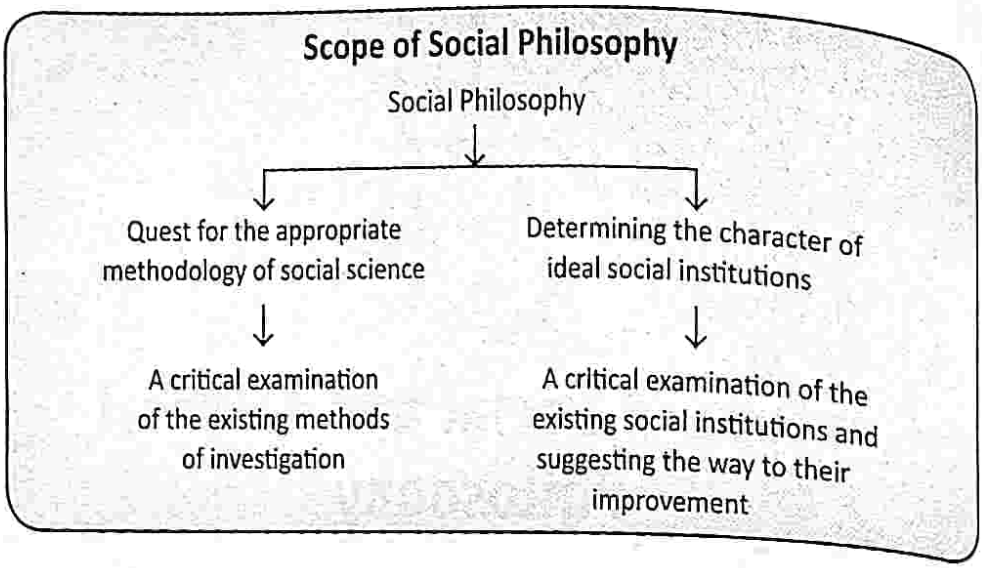
I
WHAT IS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY?

Social and political philosophy consists of two closely related subjects: social philosophy and political philosophy. While social sciences focus on the factual analysis of various aspects of social life of human beings, social and political philosophy deals with the clarification of concepts used in the study of social and political life as well as the measures to make human life worth-living.

SCOPE OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Broadly speaking, social philosophy deals with two sets of problems. In the first place, it is concerned with a critical examination of the methodology of social sciences. It is important to note that whereas natural sciences like physics, chemistry, biology, etc. are largely agreed on their methodology, there are wide and serious disagreements on both methodological and substantive questions in the realm of social sciences. For instance, in economics, sociology or political science we have several schools of thought, each of them claiming to offer the correct explanation of a given situation, and the correct prescription to improve everything. Social philosophy seeks to examine the reasons behind these divergent approaches, and evolve the criteria of their validity.

In the second place, social philosophy deals with social values, that is it seeks to determine the character of ideal social institutions. It also undertakes a critical examination of the existing social institutions and attempts to suggest suitable measures to ensure their closeness to the ideal institutions. The scope of social philosophy may be indicated in the form of the following chart:


Scope of Social Philosophy
Social Philosophy
Quest for the appropriate methodology of social science
Determining the character of ideal social institutions
A critical examination of the existing methods of investigation
A critical examination of the existing social institutions and suggesting the way to their improvement

SCOPE OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The scope of political philosophy is relatively restricted. Social philosophy is broadly concerned with a critical examination of all types of social relationships—social institutions as well as social behaviour. In this sense, it comprehends political philosophy also. In a narrower sense, political philosophy tends to undertake a philosophical scrutiny of political institutions and behaviour, *i.e.* those aspects of social life which are broadly concerned with government and politics. However, in a wider sense, political philosophy is concerned with all those aspects of social life which involve the use of power. In other words, it seeks to prevent the misuse of power in all aspects of social life (including family, school, church, etc.). In this sense, political philosophy largely coincides with social philosophy.

Power

Power denotes an access to such physical, social, legal or psychological means which enable a person, group or organization to fulfil its purpose or mould others' behaviour in order to fulfil its own design.

Political philosophy and social philosophy proceed to identify those political and social institutions respectively which we should maintain in order to ensure good life for the members of society. Political institutions are associated with the political process such as voting system, the procedure of constituting various organs of government —legislature, executive and judiciary. Since the political process itself is shaped by the interplay of various social forces, the study of political institutions must include that of the major legal, economic and even cultural institutions. In short, political philosophy is concerned with all the institutions which help to determine what John Rawls *(A Theory of Justice* ; 1971) describes as the 'basic structure' of a society. Here political philosophy tends to comprehend major areas of social philosophy within its scope.

One should not try to make a rigid separation between social and political philosophy. Some of the time-honoured subjects of political philosophy, such as the nature of the state, sovereignty, and the grounds of political obligation, clearly belong to the political; but others, such as authority, liberty, equality and justice, have a wider application and are best considered as belonging to the sphere of the social in the sense of that term which includes the political.

D.D. Raphael, *Problems of Political Philosophy* (1976)

RELATION WITH THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Social philosophy and political philosophy correspond to two important social sciences, *viz.* sociology and political science respectively. Sociology deals with social institutions as well as social groupings. Social institutions like family, school and church, etc. not only regulate the social life of man, they also involve the use of authority. Social philosophy seeks to ensure that the use of this authority becomes conducive to individual's self-development. Family should inculcate those values in man which would make him a good man. Schools should be devoted to evolving right type of education which would promote human values. Similarly, religious institutions should inculcate moral values in their followers which would promote equal respect for the followers of all religions. Now social groupings like peer groups, friendship circles, clubs and markets, etc. are the product of natural needs of man. Social philosophy must ensure that these groups maintain full freedom of the individual.

Social Sciences

Social Sciences refer to the disciplines concerned with the scientific study of various aspects of social life. Thus sociology, political science, economics, social psychology, socio-linguistics, cultural anthropology, human geography, etc. are recognized as social sciences.

Social phenomena involve human actions which have some purpose behind them. Their purpose may vary with the variations in individual intelligence, temperament and cultural background. So social phenomena are not governed by fixed laws like natural phenomena. Hence the methods of natural science cannot be applied to social sciences in their entirety. However, like natural sciences explanations in social sciences must be based on empirical observation (*i.e.* the observation based on the experience of our sense organs — sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) and their logical relationship. Again as in natural sciences, superstitions have no place in the realm of social sciences. However, social sciences cannot become entirely 'value-neutral' like natural sciences. In this sense, social sciences come very near to social philosophy.

Political science includes the study of political institutions as well as political groupings. Political institutions like government, administration, legislature, judiciary, etc. involve the use of authority in public life of men. The objective of political philosophy is to make these institutions the instruments of justice. On

the other hand, political groupings like political parties, pressure groups, lobbies and social movements, are the product of mobilization of people behind certain causes. In other words, people form these groupings by enlisting the support of large numbers for the fulfilment of certain specified goals. The objective of political philosophy is to show the way to making these grouping the vehicles of social progress.

Nature and scope of social and political philosophy may now be shown the form of the following chart:

Social and Political Philosophy
Its Relation with the Social Sciences

The Issue	Social Philosophy		Political Philosophy	
Corresponding Social Science	Sociology		Political Science	
Nature of the Concerned Organization	Social Institutions (*e.g.* family, school, church, etc.)	Social Groupings (*e.g.* peer groups, friendship circles, clubs, markets, etc.)	Political Institutions (*e.g.* government, administration, legislature, judiciary, etc.)	Political Groupings (*e.g.* political parties, pressure groups, lobbies, social movements, etc.)
Characteristics of the Concerned Organization	Use of Authority	Product of Natural Needs	Use of Authority	Product of People's Mobilization
Objectives of Pursuit	Make them Conducive to Individual's Self-Development	Make them Conducive to Freedom	Make them Instruments of Justice	Make them Vehicles of Social Progress

> Philosophy differs from science in that science seeks explanation while philosophy seeks...the giving of rational or justifying grounds either for accepting a belief or for rejecting it.
>
> D.D. Raphael: *The Problems of Political Philosophy* (1976)

II
FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Social and political philosophy largely performs two sets of functions : (*a*) Clarification of concepts; and (*b*) Determination of norms, *i.e.* the standards of right social and political behaviour. These two functions may be distinguished from each other but each of these may be considered as a common function of social as well as political philosophy.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Most of the concepts used in social philosophy and political philosophy are overlapping. For instance, the concepts of equality, freedom, justice, etc. are common to social and political philosophy. Then, though the concepts of rights, benefits, needs, legitimacy, authority, consent, obligation and obedience, etc. apparently fall within the purview of political philosophy, yet they are no less significant in the realm of social philosophy. Again, the Gandhian concept of *ahimsa* (non-injury/non-violence) primarily pertains to social philosophy, but its implications for political philosophy are very wide and significant. In short, the concepts of social and political philosophy can be clubbed together while dealing with the function of clarification of concepts.

It is important to note that most of the terms of political discourse form the part of our day-to-day language. In mathematics and natural sciences (like physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) different terms are used in a well-defined sense, and they rarely find a place in our common vocabulary, but the terms used in social sciences and social philosophy are also applied to convey our common experience. Thus the words like 'freedom', 'equality', 'justice', 'democracy', 'rights', 'duties' 'authority' and 'public interest', etc. are widely used in common parlance. When we use them in social science or social philosophy, we must be conscious of the precise sense to be conveyed by these terms. So we must develop each of such terms into a full-fledged concept.

The principles of social and political philosophy are not undisputed like those of natural science. Students of social and political philosophy may subscribe to different ideologies or different schools of thought. They must enter into a constant dialogue or debate in order to deal with particular social situations. If they are not decided about the meanings of the terms used by them, their debate will lead to nowhere. Upholders of capitalism and socialism may stand for entirely different social arrangements in order to secure freedom, equality and justice in society. But when they debate these issues, they must be using these terms in a precise sense. People may differ on who should hold power in society, but they must define 'power' in the same sense. Different thinkers may recommend the use of violence or non-violence on different grounds, but they must agree as to what is meant by 'violence' and 'non-violence'.

However, terms like 'human nature' cannot be treated as specific concepts

whose definition could be made acceptable to different schools of thought. For instance, Machiavelli (1469-1527), Hobbes (1588-1679), Locke (1632-1704) and Godwin (1756-1836) made different assumptions about human nature and arrived at different conclusions about an ideal social order. These assumptions are essentially contradictory. Their contradiction cannot be resolved by offering a definition of human nature. In the realm of social and political philosophy, we should not proceed on any contentious assumptions, but base our conclusions on scientific evidence and well-defined concepts.

DETERMINATION OF NORMS

Norms signify the criteria of right conduct in a social or political situation. If the upholders of diverse ideologies continue to cling to different criteria of right and wrong, the society will be reduced to an arena of constant conflict and cleavage. Social and political philosophy must come to its rescue. It should analyse the position taken by all contenders and show the way to determining the right course. However, it should not pretend to find the ultimate truth which would close the way to further discussion.

Ideology

Ideology refers to a set of ideas and arguments used to defend an existing or proposed distribution of power in society. These ideas are accepted to be true by their upholders without inquiring into their validity. The ruling class may propagate its ideology to strengthen its own position while its opponents may use their ideology to replace the existing order by a new one in order to achieve some laudable objective.

Karl Marx (*The German Ideology* ; 1845) described ideology as 'false consciousness'. He argued that in the process of social development material needs of men advance, but their social consciousness lags behind. The ruling class, particularly under capitalism, uses this backward consciousness or 'false consciousness' for strengthening its authority and position. The French Revolution (1789) gave the slogan of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', but it settled for liberty which upheld ' inviolability of property'. It sought freedom for a new dominant class—the capitalist class, and not for common man, *i.e.* the working class.

Georgy Lukacs, Hungarian Marxist *(History and Class Consciousness;* 1923) argued that in a capitalist society each class is characterized by its own 'false consciousness'. While the capitalist class holds its own 'bourgeois ideology', Marxism itself represents the ideology of the working class—the proletariat. Then Karl Mannheim, a German sociologist born in Hungary *(Ideology and Utopia;* 1929) sought to generalize the Marxist framework as a tool of social analysis. He distinguished between two types of 'false consciousness' : ideology and utopia. Ideology represented the tendency of conservation while utopia stood for an impetus to change, *i.e.* a set of unrealizable principles projected by the opposition. Accordingly Marxism itself represented a type of 'false consciousness' in the form of a utopia, *i.e.* the vision of a classless and stateless society.

However, Mannheim did not rule out the possibility of search for truth. He hoped that a free-floating stratum between different classes would be able to achieve disinterested or impartial knowledge. He exhorted the conflicting groups to realize partiality of their respective perspectives and complementary potentialities in those of their opponents, opening the way to a 'synthetic' common knowledge of the prevailing historical situation and a realistic assessment of actual possibilities.

Karl Popper, an Austrian philosopher *(The Open Society and Its Enemies*; 1945) argued that an ideology is always totalitarian as it promotes totalitarianism. He dubbed Plato, Hegel and Marx utopian and totalitarian thinkers. He asserted that scientific knowledge can only be pursued in an 'open society'. He identified Western liberal-democratic societies as open societies where no ideology or religion holds monopoly over people's thought, where political processes are open to public examination and criticism.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism refers to a system of governance in which the state seeks to regulate and control all aspects of life of its citizens—whether public or private, In other words, it seeks to direct all political, economic, social-cultural and intellectual activities of people towards fulfilling certain aims which are determined by the state itself. No citizen has the right or opportunity to oppose or criticize the state, or to propose any new aim.

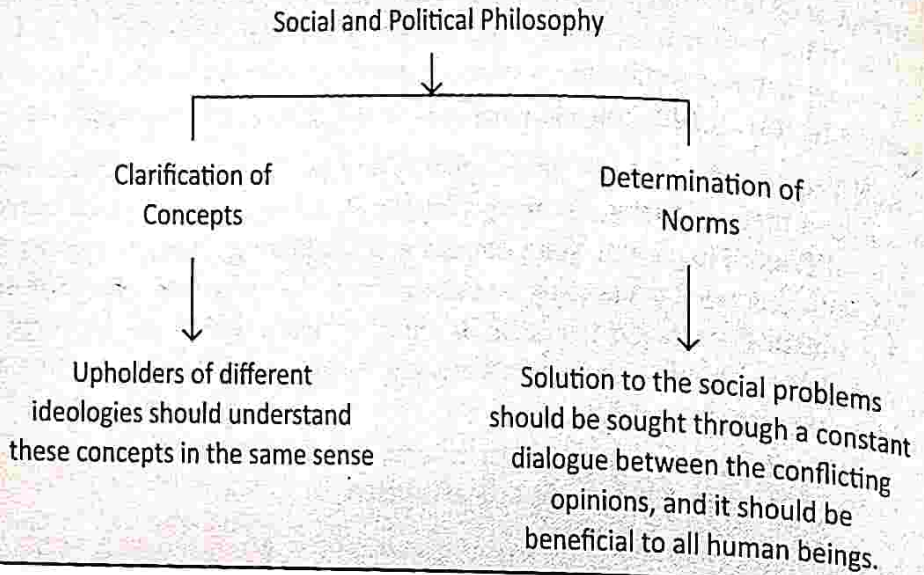
Open Society

Open society refers to a social and political system where there is a free flow of information regarding public affairs and matters of public importance. Public policy in such a system represents a reconciliation of diverse interests. Power-holders under this system do not claim that they have found the truth. Hence, it encourages freedom of expression among citizens and shows readiness to adopt new ideas. It permits the citizens to criticize the prevalent order and to seek restructuring of the existing institutions by attaining public support for the proposed changes.

In a nutshell, the determination of norms in any society cannot be left to any preconceived notions. It can only be accomplished by establishing a healthy dialogue between conflicting opinions and eliminating biased views. Any conclusion drawn from this dialogue will be only tentative, leaving adequate scope for continuing dialogue. Any solution of social problems accepted in this process should prove to be beneficial to all human beings, and this aspect should be constantly examined in the process of continuing dialogue.

Functions of social and political philosophy may briefly be shown by the following chart:

Functions of Social and Political Philosophy


Social and Political Philosophy
Clarification of Concepts
Determination of Norms
Upholders of different ideologies should understand these concepts in the same sense
Solution to the social problems should be sought through a constant dialogue between the conflicting opinions, and it should be beneficial to all human beings.

वादे वादे जायते तत्त्वबोधः
(Ancient Indian Saying)

It is through articulation of diverse opinions that the truth would be finally discovered.

CONCLUSION

When clarification of concepts is followed by the determination of norms in the realm of social and political philosophy, these concepts may be transformed into certain value-based principles, as illustrated by the following chart:

Concept	*Corresponding Principle*
Rights	Human Rights
Freedom	Emancipation
Equality	Empowerment of the Weaker Sections
Justice	Social Justice

Thus, the function of clarification of concepts in social and political philosophy reaches its logical conclusion in the evolution of value-based principles.

Q. "Social and political philosophy not only seeks to set up ideal standards for society and government but also undertakes a critical examination of the existing social and political institutions." Elucidate and comment.

2

Scientific Temper and Progress

The idea of progress or social progress represents a modern idea. It is a product of the scientific age and scientific temper. Before the advent of the scientific age in seventeenth-century Europe, any image of a golden age was attributed to the past. But the exponents of scientific temper sought to project the future as a golden age. They claimed that the humanity had suffered a lot in the past due to the prevailing ignorance, superstitions and unfounded fear, but the dawn of scientific knowledge marked a victory over these forces and held the promise of a great future.

I
NATURE OF PROGRESS

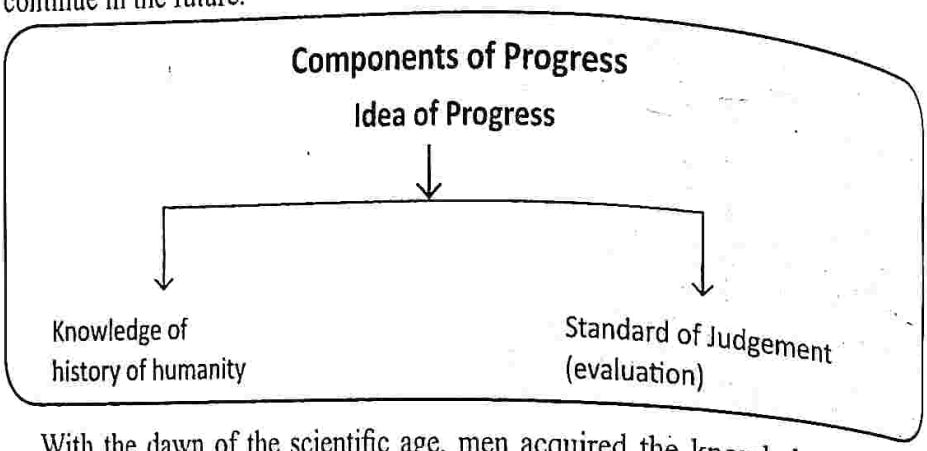
WHAT IS PROGRESS?

What is meant by progress? It implies a change, a departure from the past or a movement in a desirable direction. So it is an evaluative concept. It involves moral judgement as well as identification of the direction of social change. Distinguishing between evolution and progress, William F. Ogburn and Meyer F. Nimkoff (*A Handbook of Sociology*; 1947) observed :

> Evolution is merely change in a given direction. When we speak of biological evolution we refer to the emergence of certain organisms from others in a kind of succession... Evolution describes a series of related changes in a system of some kind. The reference is to an objective condition which is not evaluated as good or bad. Progress, on the contrary, means change for the better, and hence must imply a value judgement.

Accordingly, progress implies the occurrence of a continuous improvement of social conditions of mankind. A theory of progress can be built on two premises: (*a*) Information about what has taken place, *i.e.* knowledge of the history of humanity; and (*b*) Some standard by which these happenings could be judged so as to prove that the change has resulted in continuous betterment and that the process will

continue in the future.



With the dawn of the scientific age, men acquired the knowledge of means by which material conditions could be controlled with the aim of providing good things and increasing happiness of mankind. They also hoped to secure social justice along with widespread prosperity. Thus the initial idea of progress comprehended moral as well as material progress.

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

The twin concepts of scientific temper and progress are typically modern concepts. Before the advent of scientific temper, people sought to preserve the existing institutions and mode of thought, rather than look forward to progress. The educated people either sought to evade observation of facts, or they used such language in their arguments which had nothing to do with factual evidence. This tendency can be demonstrated from Aristotle's line of argument.

Aristotle, ancient Greek philosopher, was a conservative thinker. It would be futile to look for the idea of progress in his mode of thought. Bertrand Russell (*The Impact of Science on Society*; 1952) has pointed out that the practice of ascertaining facts by observation is an entirely modern practice which hardly existed before the seventeenth century. You cannot look for this method in Aristotle's work :

> Aristotle maintained that women have fewer teeth than men; although he was twice married, it never occurred to him to verify this statement by examining his wives' mouths... He states that a man bitten by a mad dog will not go mad, but any other animal will.... that elephants suffering from insomnia can be cured by rubbing their shoulders with salt, olive-oil, and warm water...and so on and so on.

Again, in his defence of slavery Aristotle argues that a slave is incapable of 'virtue'; hence by his nature he can serve merely as a means, or only as a 'living

tool'. In his *Politics*, Aristotle declared :

> From the hour of their birth some are marked out for subjection, and others for command...The slave is to the master what the body is to the mind; and as the body should be subject to the mind, so it is better for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master.

Here Aristotle uses the criterion of 'virtue' to determine the respective deserts of master and slave. It is not subject to verification by scientific evidence. Scientific temper would insist that human capacities must be compared in terms of physical strength, intelligence quotient and aptitude test, and not in terms of the obscure concept of 'virtue'.

The idea of progress chiefly flourished in eighteenth-century Europe in the wake of Enlightenment. But its early indictions may be found in seventeenth-century exponents of scientific mode of thinking. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), English philosopher and statesman, refuted the Greek idea of 'knowledge for knowledge sake' and asserted that 'knowledge is power'. He argued that the accumulation of knowledge was desirable because it enabled men to increase their happiness. Bacon urged men to obtain knowledge so as to use it for their own benefit by increasing their power over nature. In his view, knowledge was not directly a source of happiness. It was a means to power, and power was a means to happiness. The knowledge which Bacon recommended as useful was that of 'natural philosophy' or the natural sciences. He pinned his hopes for mankind on this new type of knowledge which was to be obtained by the experimental method. The greater the men's understanding of the material world and the greater their ability to harness nature to their purposes, the better for them.

Enlightenment

Enlightenment refers to an intellectual movement of eighteenth-century France, Germany and Great Britain. It was a period when people's religious and political life was set free from obscure and orthodox beliefs and new light was shed on the proper conduct of human affairs. This led to the growth of a new outlook, informed by reason and committed to the authority of scientific research and discovery. Old superstitions were discarded, old fears were dispelled, and a new faith in the knowledge obtained by scientific method was developed.

The seventeenth century was notable not only for its scientific discoveries, it also distinguished itself by propounding scientific method. This method could be used for attaining reliable knowledge in the sphere of social life as well as natural world. Bacon, Galileo (1564-1642) and Descartes (1596-1650) may be regarded as the chief exponents of scientific method, particularly in the sphere of natural sciences. They fostered a solid faith in the methods of explanation and discovery which have enormously increased man's power to predict and to control the course of events. In the subsequent centuries, Adam Smith (1723- 90), British philosopher, and Auguste Comte (1798-1857), French philosopher, showed the way to use of scientific method in the sphere of social sciences.

The new developments which coincided with the advent of the scientific age gave an impetus to the idea of progress. These included the accumulation of an economic surplus, the increase of social mobility and the occurrence of major inventions that dramatically increased human power over nature. However, the emergence of the unique social institution of organized social inquiry proved to be the strongest force behind the faith in progress. During the eighteenth century, particularly in France, an increasing number of intellectuals came to believe that the methods and spirit of science should be applied to all fields. In other words, the cumulative improvement in human knowledge and power in the field of natural sciences could be applied to the organization of human society. Marquis de Condorcet (1743-94), eminent French philosopher, in his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1793), expressed the idea of progress as follows :

> Our hopes for the future condition of the human race can be subsumed under three important heads : the abolition of inequality between nations, the progress of equality within each nation, and the true perfection of mankind.

Condorcet advanced the theory that in the course of history, mankind follows the path of progress. He analysed nine distinguishable periods up to his time. The tenth which he hoped would follow upon the success of the French Revolution, would see the abolition of social, political and international inequalities. Politics would then be rationally conducted by the use of mathematical techniques. Condorcet himself sought to develop such techniques for application to social and political matters.

French Revolution

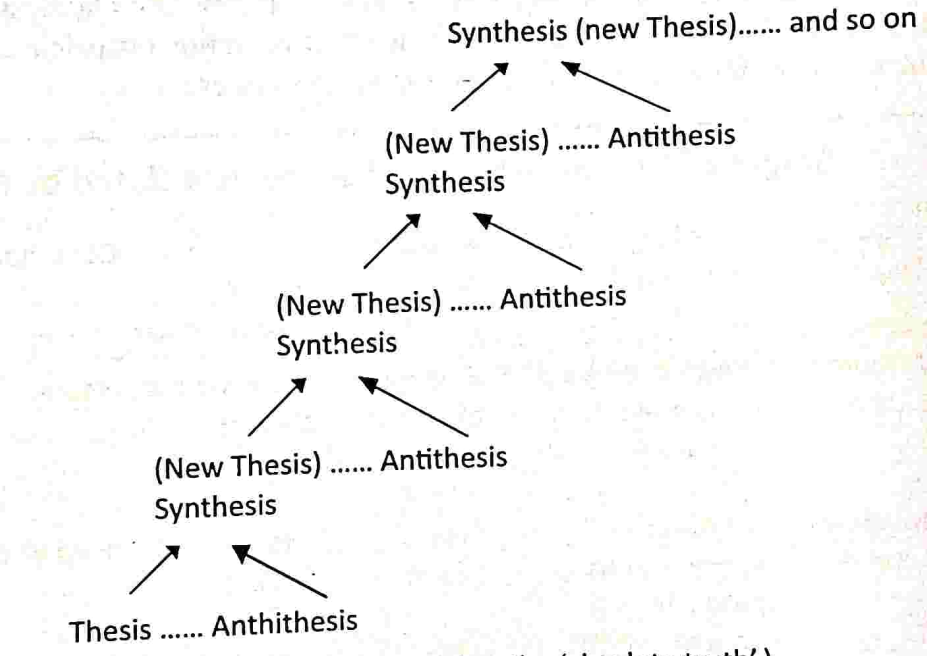
In European history, French Revolution refers to the culmination of the series of violent political and social upheavals in France (1789-99), caused by the revolt of the middle classes against the prevalent regime. It resulted in the overthrow of King Louis XVI, the end of monarchy as well as the supremacy of nobility and clegry, followed by the establishment of popular sovereignty.

Voltaire (1694-1778), French philosopher of the eighteenth century, agreed with Condorcet that the cruelties, follies and superstitions prevailing in the past ages would be overcome by the dissemination of knowledge among the underprivileged. Then Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), eminent German philosopher, saw human reason as the liberting force. Kant believed that man was destined to be driven forward by the conflict in his nature between the elements of concord and discord until he learnt to submit himself to a universal law prescribed by a society of the nations and thus attain eternal peace.

G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831), famous German philosopher, gave an added fillip to the theory of progress. He envisaged human history as a continuous march of spirit or consciousness. It is a process through which human society achieves its perfection. Hegel postulated a dialectical path of development. According to him, 'idea' or 'consciousness' was the essence of universe, and all social institutions were the manifestations of the changing form of idea. Idea evolved into new forms because of its inherent tension, exemplified in the clash between *thesis* (partial

truth) and *antithesis* (opposite of thesis—again partial truth) resulting in *synthesis* (which is nearer the truth). As long as synthesis itself contains partial truth, it takes the role of a new thesis and undergoes the same process until it reaches the absolute truth, exemplified in the 'absolute idea' or 'absolute consciousness' as shown in the following diagram:

Dialectical Path of Historical Development As Postulated By Hegel



(This process will go on until it reaches the 'absolute truth'.)

In the sphere of social institutions, Hegel's dialectical process was illustrated by the emergence of family (representing *particularistic altruism*), civil society (representing *universal egoism*) and the state (representing *universal altruism*). Hegel thought that the state represented the perfect social institution — 'the march of God on earth'. While Hegel's analysis of the mechanism of social change is quite illuminating, there is no reason to uphold his conclusion about the rise of nation-state as the final stage of historical development.

Karl Marx (1818-83), another German philosopher, sought to modify Hegel's theory of progress in order to give it a socialist orientation. Accepting Hegel's dialectical framework of social change, Marx sought to substitute 'materialism' for Hegel's 'idealism'. Marx's theory of 'dialectical materialism' postulated that 'matter' (and not the idea) was the essence of the universe, and that social institutions were the manifestations of the changing material conditions. Matter underwent the dialectical process because of its inherent tension, until perfect material conditions, exemplified in a 'rational mode of production', come into existence. Friedrich Engels (1820-95), Marx's close associate, in his *Anti- Dühring* (1878) postulated three laws of dialectical materialism : (*a*) the transformation of quantity into quality, and *vice versa*; (*b*) the interpenetration of opposites; and

(*c*) the negation of negation. These principles signify the process of resolving contradictions of material conditions of human life which paves the way for social progress. Class conflict is also a manifestation of this process.

Marx's analysis of major historical epochs and the future course of development is described as historical materialism. Each stage of historical development marks an improvement over the previous stage. In this respect Marx, like Hegel, maintains his faith in progress. However, Marx substantially departs from Hegel in regard to the final goal of progress. Instead of Hegel's image of the state as the form of perfect social organization, Marx envisages a stateless and classless society as the final stage of social progress. Marx's account of major historical epochs and the future course of development may be shown as under :

Stages of Historical Materialism as Postulated by Marx

Historical Epoch	*Prevailing Mode of Production*	*Brought about by*	*Form of Social Organization*	*Contending Classes*
Ancient times	Household-based small-scale production	Emergence of private property	Slave-Owning Society	Master and Slave
Medieval times	Large-scale agriculture-based production	Rise of Feudalism	Feudal Society	Lord and Serf
Modern times	Large-scale machine-based production	Rise of Capitalism	Capitalist Society	Capitalist and Worker
Future-I	-do-	Socialist Revolution	Socialist Society	Worker in power and the former Capitalist
Future-II	-do-	Liquidation of the remnants of capitalism	Communist Society	No contending Classes as it will be a classless society; the state will 'wither away'.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), French philosopher, is another prominent exponent of the theory of progress. Comte is regarded the founder of sociology. He divided it into social statics and social dynamics which dealt with social order and social progress respectively. While maintenance of order is the function of government, progress is the outcome of historical development of the human mind. Comte outlined three stages of intellectual development, based on different sources of knowledge :

Comte's Analysis of the Stages of Intellectual Development

Stage of Intellectual Development	*Corresponding Source of Knowledge*
Theological Stage	Belief in supernatural causes : superstition
Metaphysical Stage	Belief in abstract metaphysical forces: abstract speculation and reflection
Positive Stage	Discovery of laws governing facts: science

Comte envisaged that social progress would reach its final goal with the perfection of scientific method, particularly in the sphere of social science. Comte outlined the hierarchy of sciences which indicates the course of development of various sciences :

Comte's Hierarchy of Sciences

Sociology : The ultimate science
↑
Physiology
↑
Chemistry
↑
Physics
↑
Astronomy
↑
Mathematics : The foundation of science

As we proceed upward in this hierarchy, each science becomes more specific, more complex and less amenable to scientific measurement and prediction. Mathematics, as the foundation of all sciences, is concerned with most general and abstract things. Its character is initially scientific-positive ; its development does not pass through theological and metaphysical stages. As we proceed toward astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology, and sociology, each one turns out to be more complex and nearer to human life. Use of scientific method becomes more and more difficult in each successive science. Hence sociology is the most complex science, directly dealing with man's social life. Comte believed that in spite of increasing complexity, each science could be brought to scientific-positive stage of development. In this effort, each successive science should emulate the precision of its preceding science so that sociology is ultimately brought to the level of precision obtained in mathematics.

As the founder of 'positive philosophy', Comte insisted that our inquiry must

be true to the data of experience. It should establish laws on the basis of these data. But it should not go beyond them in a fruitless search for hidden causes and final ends. All genuine human knowledge shall be scientific and methodical. *No question that cannot be answered by science has an answer. However, answer to moral questions would automatically be provided by the scientific knowledge.* Hence there is no question of assuming a dichotomy between fact and value, or excluding the domain of values from the sphere of scientific investigation. *Social progress is attained through precise knowledge of facts as well as values.*

II
SIGNIFICANCE OF SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

WHAT IS SCIENTIFIC TEMPER?

Scientific temper stands for the disposition to rely on scientific method for discovering truth and acting on the truth so discovered. It does not subscribe to miracles, magic or sorcery. It draws conclusions only from scientific evidence and reason, and rules out any role of abstract forces or supernatural causes, movement of heavenly bodies, acts of ghosts or evil spirits, etc. in regulating human life. *Science and superstition cannot go together.*

Superstition

Superstition refers to a widely prevalent belief that is neither based on experience, nor on logic, nor on scientific evidence. Ordinarily, the belief in magic, ghosts, demons or fairies is understood to be a common superstition. In some cases, signs of good luck and bad luck exemplify superstitions. Many people regard 13 as an unlucky number. Some people believe that if you walk under a ladder, it brings you bad luck. In India, many people believe that if a cat crosses your way, you will not be successful in your mission. Sighting of an owl in a human settlement is considered by some people a sign of imminent disaster.

Scientific method holds that natural phenomena are governed by the laws inherent in nature which can be discovered by proper investigation. It draws conclusions from empirical data; it excludes the role of abstract forces or supernatural causes from consideration. Empirical data are the facts observed through our sense organs : sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Since all physically fit persons would observe alike, empirical data are always verifiable. In order to discover a scientific law, empirical data must be placed in a logical relationship. Here our faculty of reason must be applied. Mere coincidences would not prove the rule. Since all persons with a sound mind would have similar faculty of reason, a scientific law is also verifiable.

In a nutshell, scientific method proceeds by the following steps:

(*a*) **Observation** : It relies on sense-experience alone and rules out supernatural or metaphysical causation which is beyond our sense-experience;

(*b*) **Generalization** : It is based on the observation of regularities leading to the establishment of relation and correlation between different factors or variables. This may either be obtained by :

Inductive Method (proceeding from 'particular to general', *i.e.* arriving at a general rule after observing similarities in particular cases), or

Deductive Method (proceeding from 'general to particular', *i.e.* postulating a general rule or 'hypothesis' and then verifying or falsifying it by observing particular cases).

Hypothesis

Hypothesis refers to an idea which is suggested as a possible explanation for certain type of situations or conditions, but it is yet to be proved to bc right or wrong through actual experience.

Generalization must be expressed in the form of a general rule, *preferably in quantitative terms*, which should be capable of verification by experimentation;

(*c*) **Explanation** : It consists in giving reasons for the general rules, for without such reasoning any observation might be based on coincidence. A reasoned explanation will make particular events, situations or tendencies meaningful; and finally,

(*d*) **Prediction and Prescription** : It means that in the light of the known facts and general rules, their possible outcome could be suggested; and measures for achieving such objectives as higher efficiency, stability, satisfaction, etc. could be recommended.

POPPER ON THE NATURE OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Karl Popper (1902-94), Austrian philosopher, observed that scientific method gives authenticity to our stand. You cannot reject any scientific discovery as 'Jewish' science or 'bourgeois' science, as done by Nazis and Marxists respectively. Popper's views on the nature of scientific method are given in some of his famous works, particularly in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934; Eng. tr. 1959), *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957), *Conjectures and Refutations*: *The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (1963).

According to Popper, science can aspire to tell us truths about the world. But its status is always tentative. Newton's theory was regarded to be the most impressive work in science until it was overthrown by Einstein's theory. So we can never be sure that we have reached the truth. In Popper's view scientific knowledge grows through conjecture and refutation. It means that we should start with a hypothesis and try to falsify it through actual observation. For instance, we can say that swan is white until we come across a coloured swan, or that crow is black until we come across a crow of a different colour. Thus Popper stood for the deductive method of generalization.

Unlike his contemporary exponents of scientific method, Popper argued that

metaphysics cannot be set aside in the course of scientific inquiry. At times the pursuit of certain things beyond the domain of our sense-experience (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) may lead to an important scientific discovery. For instance, Arabs wished to discover 'touchstone' — the fabulous stone that would turn ordinary metals into gold. Their efforts led to the development of alchemy — the foundation of modern chemistry. Metaphysics may provide us with a hypothesis which may be subjected to falsification for arriving at scientific knowledge.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics refers to a branch of philosophy which inquires into the nature of reality behind the universe that is beyond the reach of our sense-experience (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch).

In any case, like scientific knowledge, metaphysical knowledge is also based on a logical structure although presently it may include conjectures only. Karl Popper (1902-94), eminent exponent of scientific method, observed that a metaphysical statement cannot be set aside by a scientist. Indeed it may serve as a starting point for scientific inquiry, as a hypothesis about touchstone (a metaphysical statement) was responsible for the development of the whole discipline of alchemy (the foundation of modern chemistry). Hence metaphysics will continue to remain relevant for human society.

However, before making any metaphysical assumption, we must ensure that all efforts at scientific investigation of the phenomenon in question have been made, and that they have proved to be inadequate to provide satisfactory answer to our questions.

Popper argued that the inductive method of generalization relies on accumulated instances, but there is no limit on the number of instances to be observed for arriving at a general rule. On the other hand, the deductive method starts with a hypothesis which can be falsified even by observing a single instance. It also helps us in distinguishing science from pseudo-science. *While science is always ready to subject its hypothesis to falsification, pseudo-science claims to be unfalsifiable or it shuns falsification.* In order to evade falsification, a pseudo-science goes on adding qualifications to its statements so as to accommodate every conceivable situation. Popper has particularly attacked psycho-analysis and Marxism for their pseudo-scientific character. He observed that the theories of psycho-analysis were confirmed in those situations where in fact they had not been genuinely put to test. Marxism, according to Popper, ignored the distinction between genuine laws and historical trends. He pointed out that the so-called 'law of the increasing concentration of capital' enunciated by Marxism was at best a statement of a historical trend, and not a genuine law.

Popper strongly held that history is largely shaped by the growth of knowledge. Nobody can predict the course of its growth because to predict knowledge means we already possess it which is not true. Again, the nature of social science is such that it cannot generate laws of total social development, but only laws for fragmented and isolated social units. In other words, methodology of social sciences requires us to focus on individual cases rather than on the total situation.

This approach is called 'methodological individualism'. From this position Popper draws the conclusion that no rational approach to social problems can guide us to undertake total change. It is therefore imperative that any programme of social change should be allowed to proceed only in small steps. Popper has termed this approach as *social engineering* or *piecemeal engineering* in order to distinguish it from *utopian* approach which aims at total change.

KUHN'S VIEW OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Thomas Kuhn (1922-96), American philosopher, advanced a new theory of the growth of scientific knowledge in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). Kuhn argued that when a discipline is dominated by *paradigm*, it may be called *normal science*. Paradigm consists in the specification of a set of problems along with standards and methods of their solution—virtually accepted by all those who are competent in a given field of study. It refers to a particular scientific achievement that provides a model for subsequent scientific activity. Newton's laws of motion as enunciated in his *Principia Mathematica* (1678) may be cited as an example of paradigm.

However, the prevailing paradigm may not be able to solve all the new problems that may arise in the domain of normal science. So in due course it may be faced with *anomalies*. An anomaly is a situation where some of the observed facts are not found to be consistent with the understanding of the prevalent paradigm. Ordinarily anomalies are resolved by improving our grasp of the paradigm as it applies to particular cases. But it may not always be possible.

When anomalies persist and accumulate to the point that we start questioning the correctness of the paradigm itself, then we have a *crisis*. During a crisis, the scientific community may look for a possible new paradigm which would apply to all hitherto known situations. If a crisis is resolved by adopting a new paradigm to replace the old one, this may be called a *scientific revolution*. The new paradigm defines a new version of normal science, and the cycle continues. Acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution (1859) may be cited as an example of scientific revolution.

Kuhn held that big achievements of civilization are secured by a paradigm, in spite of its methodological imperfection. *Significance of scientific method lies in its capacity of problem-solving and crisis-management, and not in methodological sophistication*. It is significant that while Popper's approach to scientific method insisted on pure science, Kuhn's approach focuses on *applied science*. Popper held that scientific knowledge should be placed under constant scrutiny. Kuhn is not so rigorous. He believes that anomalies should be tolerated until scientific revolution becomes inevitable.

Both Popper and Kuhn hold that our scientific knowledge is always tentative. It is not a cumulative knowledge because what is believed to be true today may prove to be false tomorrow. This view may be invoked to *question the prospects of scientific progress itself*. However, this may not affect the prospects of social progress. We may achieve social progress with the help of the existing scientific knowledge at a time. Even if that knowledge is rejected subsequently, the wheel

of social progress shall not be thereby reversed. Unlike the growth of scientific knowledge, social progress is a cumulative phenomenon.

> Science says the first word on everything, and the last word on nothing.
> Victor Hugo (1802-85)

III
NEHRU'S VISION OF SCIENCE

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Indian social philosopher and statesman, commended science and scientific temper for social reconstruction in India. He insisted that Indians should develop scientific temper in order to avail themselves of the benefits of scientific knowledge and its application in the form of new technology. As the first Prime Minister of independent India, he set up several scientific laboratories and industrial establishments. He described them as the 'temples' of modem India. In his message to the Silver Jubilee session of the Indian Science Congress at Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1938, Nehru observed :

> It was science alone that could solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.

Nehru admired science particularly as a source of human emancipation. He did not accept a science which confined itself to searching for truth alone irrespective of its social consequences. His appeal to scientists centred around the following themes : (*a*) Science must serve the common people. It must help to solve their material problems like food and other basic necessities of life; (*b*) Scientific way of thinking and scientific temper should be spread to all spheres of life including politics; (*c*) Science should tackle the larger human problems — social, economic, psychological, etc.; and finally, (*d*) Science should be tempered with wisdom. It must pay attention to the spiritual side of man.

This view was beautifully summed up in Nehru's famous work, *The Discovery of India* (1956) in the following words :

> Science deals with the domain of positive knowledge but the temper which it should produce goes beyond that domain. The ultimate purposes of man may be said to gain knowledge, to realize truth, to appreciate goodness and beauty. The scientific method of objective inquiry is not applicable to all these, and much that is vital in life seems to lie beyond its scope—the sensitiveness to art and poetry, the emotion that beauty produces, the inner recognition of goodness.

Scientific temper, in Nehru's view, consists in approaching all problems with an open mind. It implies a critical attitude toward the prevailing beliefs, the search for truth and new knowledge, refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the readiness to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the

reliance on observed fact and not on preconceived theory. Contrasting scientific temper with religious beliefs, Nehru further observed :

> As knowledge advances, the domain of religion, in the narrow sense of the word, shrinks. The more we understand life and nature, the less we look for supernatural causes. Whatever we can understand and control ceases to be a mystery... The final mysteries still remain far beyond the reach of the human mind and are likely to continue to remain so.... Life still offers not only the loveliness of the world but also the exciting adventure of fresh and never ceasing discoveries, of new panoramas opening out and new ways of living, adding to its fullness and ever making it richer and more complete.

Nehru's equal concern for science and humanity makes him a champion of 'scientific humanism'. He expressed his concern for humanity in the following words :

> The modern mind, that is to say the better type of the modern mind, is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. It is governed by a practical idealism for social betterment (*The Discovery of India*; 1956).

Scientific Humanism

Scientific humanism refers to the belief that science can and should be used to enhance human dignity and secure human freedom and emancipation. This term was largely popularized by M.N. Roy (1886-1954), modern Indian philosopher. Roy argued that man remains a helpless victim of superstitions and the fear of extra-terrestrial powers until scientific knowledge illuminates his path. It liberates him from the time-honoured prejudices and motivates him to discard old hypotheses based on ignorance.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Indian statesman and political philosopher, invoked his scientific humanism to convey that the power gained through the advancement of science should be directed to the service of humanity, and not towards private profit and exploitation of others.

In the sphere of contemporary environmentalism, scientific humanism refers to a healthy interface between nature and human being. It implies that the scientific knowledge about nature should be applied to improve the quality of human life without damaging the inherent quality of nature.

In the past, science used to look at nature as something almost apart from man. But now, man no longer sees nature as something distinct from himself. This new attitude has led to bridging the gap between humanism and the scientific spirit, a growing synthesis between the two, resulting in a kind of 'scientific humanism'. Nehru eulogizes the 'attempt to find a harmony between the world of fact and the world of spirit.' The physicians have discovered that it is not enough to treat the body of the individual or of society as a whole. The modem approach to medical science reaffirms Plato's dictum that physicians for the body and physicians for the soul are one and indivisible. Nehru also recalls Einstein's warning that 'the fate of the human race was more than ever dependent on its moral strength today'.

In a nutshell, Nehru's scientific humanism implies that the power gained

through the advancement of science should be directed to the service of humanity, and not toward private profit and exploitation of others.

CONCLUSION

It is surprising that whereas in the sphere of material technology we continue to benefit from the achievements of scientific method, yet in the sphere of social life our attitude is still governed by superstitions in many cases. At times even religion is invoked to uphold certain superstitions which have no logical basis, not to speak of any moral value. As Jawaharlal Nehru observed :

> With the passage of time we have developed narrow-mindedness in the name of religion. What kind of religion is this that prevents man from meeting man? In the name of religion it has been called a sin to undertake a sea voyage (*Living Thoughts of Jawaharlal Nehru, ed. by Mulk Raj Anand*).

Religion and science should play complementary roles in our social life. They should be invoked to secure our moral and material progress respectively. If religion is used to promote belief in miracles and supernatural forces, it will be inimical to scientific temper. If the existing social and economic inequalities are treated as the outcome of our deeds in some previous birth in the name of religion, we will be prevented from discovering the real cause of social injustice, not to speak of finding its solution.

Lack of scientific temper in our society is responsible for encouraging faith in astrology, numerology, ill omens, ill effect of solar and lunar eclipse, etc. which have no logical basis. The increasing popularity of *vaastu* and *feng shui* is another example of departure from scientific mindset. Match-making by horoscope is also a part of this attitude.

Many inhuman practices continue to exist in the developing countries of Asia and Africa which are the glaring examples of lack of scientific temper. In one Indian state dismal performance of a thermal power station causing extreme power shortage was sought to be rectified by assigning the task to a *vaastu* expert who suggested changing the position of some gates and replace the standing trees with neem and eucalyptus plants. In some states tribal women were branded as witches and burnt alive on the orders of none other than the village panchayat. And a woman who was victim of AIDS was declared an outcaste and stoned to death. In an African country, a young woman bearing a child out of wedlock was awarded death by stoning.

In one of our neighbouring countries, the problem of drought was sought to be solved in a strange way. On the orders of the elders of their community, women were made to go naked and plough the fields in order to appease the rain-god! In our own country, women were not allowed to enter places of worship as they were considered 'impure' during the period of their menstruation. Scientific evidence shows that this so-called 'impure' menstrual blood forms the bed for the foetus in the event of fertilization, which is the very source of a new life on earth! What is the ground of calling it 'impure' except the widespread superstition?

In short, if we seriously inculcate scientific temper among people, the prevailing discrimination, injustice and inefficiency will be largely eliminated, paving the

way for tremendous social progress.

IV
MATERIAL AND MORAL PROGRESS

Development of natural sciences enables men to control nature and thereby secure material progress. Material progress implies larger production of goods and services, creation of new means of satisfaction and comfort and a general expansion of material civilization. Moral progress implies protection of human dignity and enhancement of self-esteem. Conditions of liberty, equality and justice are certainly conducive to moral progress.

Human progress postulates a judicious combination of material and moral progress. However, these two aspects of progress are not necessarily interdependent. Nor they are necessarily opposed to each other. Some measure of material progress is necessary for creating the conditions of moral progress, but an unbridled pursuit of material progress would prove detrimental to moral progress.

Some modern Indian social philosophers have dwelled at length on the relative importance of material and moral progress. Of these, Swami Vivekanand and Mahatma Gandhi are particularly important.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANAND

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902) used the analogy of Hindu caste system to indicate the way to human progress. At the outset, it may be pointed out that Vivekanand was not a votary of caste system. He asserted that the caste system was opposed to the essence of Hindu religion. Caste represented a social custom, and all our great preachers had tried to break it down. From Buddhism downwards, every new sect had preached against caste. However, as a form of social stratification and division of labour caste system represented a universal phenomenon.

In a nutshell, caste system implied the division of society into four classes: *Brahmin* or the priests; *Kshatriya* or the soldiers ; *Vaishya* or the traders; and *Shudra* or the labourers, *i.e.* the working class. Since this social division is universal, history shows that the period of ascendancy of each caste is marked by different levels of moral progress. As Vivekanand observed :

> Among the Chinese, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Aryas, the Iranians, the Jews, the Arabs—among all these ancient nations, the supreme power of guiding society is, in the first period of their history, in the hands of the *Brahmin* or the priest. In the second period, the ruling power is the *Kshatriya*, that is either absolute monarchy or oligarchical government by a chosen body of men.

This process goes on. As Vivekanand further observed in the context of his contemporary world :

> Among the modern Western nations, with England at their head, this power of controlling society has been for the first time, in the hands of the *Vaishya* or

mercantile communities, made rich through the carrying on of commerce (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekanand*, Vol. 4).

Vivekanand predicted that his times would be followed by a new era marked by *Shudra* rule, that is the ascendancy of the labourers or the working class. It would take place first in Russia, and then in China. By this he did not mean that the *Shudras* or the lowest class would become powerful by assuming military or economic power. Rather he held that the labour power itself would become the key to supreme power in society.

Vivekanand vividly described the salient features of the rule of each caste which may be shown by the following chart :

Salient Features of the Rule of Different Castes as Identified by Vivekanand

Character of the Ruling Class	*Merits of their Rule*	*Demerits of their Rule*
Brahmin (the priests)	It lays the foundation of sciences; it cultivates the mind through which it governs	Tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds; monopoly in the possession of knowledge
Kshatriya (the soldiers)	Expansion of knowledge; advancement of arts and social culture	Tyrannical and cruel rule
Vaishya (the traders)	Further expansion of knowledge; dissemination of ideas in all directions	It is awful in its silent crushing and blood-sucking power; decadence of culture
Shudra (the labourers)	Distribution of physical comforts; expansion of ordinary education	Lowering of culture; dwindling of extraordinary geniuses

Vivekanand's vision of human progress postulates "a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal equality of the last can be kept intact, minus their evils" (*The Complete Works*, Vol. 6).

However, Vivekanand was fully convinced that the pursuit of moral progress was of no avail in the face of abject poverty and starvation. Though a severe critic of socialism, he was prepared to accept it for fighting the prevailing poverty. As he stated :

> I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread (*The Complete Works*, Vol. 6).

In any case, material progress had a very limited role in the realm of human progress. Moral or spiritual progress could be achieved by minimizing our material needs. As Vivekanand elucidated :

> The more advanced a society or nation is in spirituality, the more is that society or nation civilized. No nation can be said to have become civilized only because it has succeeded in increasing the comforts of material life by bringing into use lots of machinery and things of that sort. The present-day civilization of the West is multiplying day by day only the wants and distresses of men (*The Complete Works*, Vol. 6).

The underlying message of this discourse is that our material progress should focus on the fulfilment of our minimum needs, and then moral progress should be attained through the expansion of knowledge, the advancement of arts and social culture and the promotion of general equality.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was particularly outspoken in his preference for moral progress to material progress. In *Hind Swaraj* (1908), Gandhi predicted ultimate downfall of the Western civilization until it changed its course and purpose. He argued that the industrial system was changing the natural order, exalting the status of the machine and lowering the status of the human being. A new god had been created in the form of mass production resulting in the unprecedented material abundance. The common man, the former producer of wealth, of material and artistic value, was now the servant of the power machine, a degraded being! Contrasting the 'modern civilization' with the traditional Indian civilization, Gandhi observed :

> Modern civilization is chiefly materialistic, as ours is chiefly spiritual. Modern civilization occupies itself in the investigation of the laws of matter and employs human ingenuity in investing or discovering means of production and weapons of destruction. Ours is chiefly occupied in exploring spiritual laws (*Living Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. by Mulk Raj Anand).

Gandhi insisted on the minimization of our material needs in order to secure our moral or spiritual progress. As he pointed out:

> A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures.

Gandhi confessed that moral progress was not possible amidst the conditions of extreme poverty. Minimum needs of everybody must be met in order to save their dignity. As Gandhi maintained :

> No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation. Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself. But for this very simple performance we need no assistance from economists or their laws (*Selections from Gandhi*

by Nirmal Kumar Bose; 1948).

In Gandhi's view removal of poverty was indispensable to overcome moral degradation of human beings. Thus he wrote in *Young India* (1927) :

> For the poor the economic is the spiritual. You cannot make any other appeal to those starving millions. It will fall flat on them. But you take food to them and they will regard you as their God. They are incapable of any other thought.

Material production was, therefore, necessary to provide for the fulfilment of minimum needs of human beings. It was necessary to keep them alive. Beyond this point, material progress was not at all necessary. Gandhi commended minimization of wants which would ensure moral progress of human beings. As he asserted :

> Civilization in the real sense of the term consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants, which promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the capacity for service. One can reduce one's wants by perseverance, and the reduction of wants makes for happiness—a healthy body and a peaceful mind (*From Yeravada Mandir*; 1945).

Gandhi deprecated the craze for machinery which not only led to the multiplication of wants but also deprived a large number of people of their right to work. The craze for labour-saving machines left thousands of people without work and threw them on the open streets to die of starvation. Gandhi would welcome only such machines that contributed to everybody's welfare, and not the ones that created glaring social inequalities.

According to Gandhi, moral upgradation of human beings consisted in the performance of duty. He identified moral progress of mankind as true civilization. So he wrote in *Hind Swaraj* (1908) :

> Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization is "good conduct".

In a nutshell, Gandhi sought to contain material progress upto the fulfilment of minimum needs of food, clothing and shelter. Beyond this point, all social energy should be devoted to moral progress which consists in the minimization of wants, self-control and performance of duty. Only moral progress can win true happiness for all human beings.

Q.1. Define 'scientific temper'. In what sense is it conducive to progress?

2. Give a brief account of Nehru's vision of science and scientific temper.

3. Distinguish between material and moral progress. Elucidate their relationship with reference to the vision of Swami Vivekanand or Mahatma Gandhi.

3

State and Sovereignty

I
MEANING OF SOVEREIGNTY

SOVEREIGNTY AS THE SUPREME LEGAL AUTHORITY

Sovereignty is regarded as an essential element of the state. The state is constituted by four elements: population, territory, government and sovereignty. Of these the first three elements, *viz.* population, territory and government are visible to us, but sovereignty is an abstract element. The state itself is an abstract entity. It is the one abstract element, *viz.* sovereignty which brings into existence the other abstract entity, *viz.* the state. When I owe allegiance to the state, I owe it to an abstract entity while I may continue to criticize or 'oppose' the existing government. Governments may come and go, but the state goes on for ever, as long as its sovereignty is intact !

State

State refers to the set of institutions within a society which is responsible for taking public decisions, making and enforcing law, maintaining justice, public safety as well as public order. In order to perform these functions effectively, the state is always armed with supreme legal authority. In actual practice, functions of the state are performed by government.

Sovereignty is primarily a legal concept. The term 'sovereignty' is derived from the Latin word *superanus* meaning supreme. Thus sovereignty denotes supremacy or supreme power of the state. To be precise, it should be defined as 'supreme legal power' of the state which becomes 'authority' as soon as it is duly recognized by all concerned. In other words, as long as we uphold sovereignty of the state, the state shall be regarded legally superior to all other associations within the state, and it shall deal with other sovereign states on equal footing.

Clarification of concepts is an important function of social and political philosophy. D.D. Raphael *(Problems of Political Philosophy*; 1976) has identified

three steps in the process of clarification of concepts : (*a*) Analysis; (*b*) Synthesis, and (*c*) Improvement. Illustrating his point from the concept of sovereignty, Raphael observes:

> By analysis of a concept I mean specifying its elements, often by way of definition: for example, one can analyse or define sovereignty as supreme legal authority, specifying the three essential elements which make up the concept.

In other words, sovereignty implies authority; this authority is legal; and in the legal sphere, it is supreme. Authority consists of two important components: Power and Legitimacy. Power involves the capacity to get a decision obeyed by others against their will. When power of an institution is accompanied by legitimacy, people spontaneously tend to obey its commands which are now regarded to be righteous, appropriate and beneficial to society. So authority means the power that is used rightfully. When an authority tries to enforce its decision, it is hoped that most people will obey it willingly as majority of the people follow traffic lights and traffic signs automatically as they regard them beneficial for everyone. However, when some people try to be too smart and ignore traffic rules, they not only risk their own life and property, but they are also challaned by police and fined by magistrates for their fault. Thus where legitimacy fails to work, power is invoked to handle the situation.

When authority of the state is regarded to be legal, it means that it can make laws at its will, and not under the instructions of any other agency. These laws are binding on all: nobody coming within its jurisdiction can claim exemption from their operation; and anybody violating the law is liable to punishment. Legal authority of the state may be distinguished from other types of authority, such as parents' authority over children (which may cease to operate when the children are grown up), authority of church, school or club, etc. (which becomes inoperative as soon as an individual relinquishes their membership). Now supreme legal authority of the state implies that the law made by the state is superior to custom or any other law, like natural law or divine law or even international law. When the custom of *sati* (*i.e.* the custom of widow-burning on the funeral pyres of her dead husband) is abolished by law of the state, it cannot be continued by the force of custom or religious sanction. Any other order can become operative only when its content is incorporated into the law made by the state at its will.

Natural Law

Natural Law refers to a set of rules of good conduct which exist independently of conventional law. These are directly derived from nature which can be discovered through moral intuition and by the application of human faculty of reasoning. Champions of natural law regard it superior to any other law.

Divine Law

Divine Law refers to a set of rules of good conduct which are claimed to have originated from the will of God. In practice these rules are derived from holy books and scriptures and interpreted by the religious authority concerned.

International Law

International law refers to a set of general principles and specific rules which are duly recognized by the members of the international community in their dealing with each other. International law is primarily concerned with the regulation of their mutual relations, peaceful settlement of their disputes, and the rights of belligerent as well as neutral nations during the times of war.

The next function of clarification of a concept is synthesis. It means showing the relationship whereby one concept implies or is implied by another. In the context of sovereignty, it may be stated that I owe allegiance to the state and thereby I undertake to obey its laws. The state in turn provides full protection to my life, liberty and property. Thus there is a logical relationship between my allegiance to the state and the protection provided to me by the state.

Now the final step in the process of clarification of a concept consists in improvement of the concept. It means recommending a definition or use of the concept in such a way that will assist clarity or coherence. In other words, we must identify the essence of the concept in question and discern it from its less significant implications. As Raphael has further illustrated :

> One can recommended, as I do, that the concept of sovereignty should be used *only* of the legal authority, and not of the coercive power, of a State.

Since the concept of sovereignty attributes supreme power to the will of the sovereign, it is by nature absolute, unlimited and perpetual power. This may, however, *not* be interpreted as an *arbitrary* power. The absolute power implied by sovereignty is not intended to be exercised without reason or without invoking one's conscience or sense of justice or without regard to the prevalent customs, social values, ideals or necessity of the common interest or public interest. Due regard to all these factors has to be given, otherwise the legitimacy and authority of the sovereign power will be rapidly eroded and sovereignty may eventually be lost. The idea behind the absolute nature of sovereignty is that, legally speaking, the sovereign is not obliged to consult or seek the approval of any other individual or group whether a particular decision, command or law is right or wrong. He is empowered to decide all such issues at his own will and discretion, and his decisions will be binding on all unless he himself chooses to revoke them!

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In fact, the modern theory of the state was perfected only when the concept of sovereignty was introduced into it. Jean Bodin (1530-96), French writer of the sixteenth century, was the first to formulate the concept of sovereignty systematically. Although in ancient days Aristotle had talked of the supreme power located in different bodies under different forms of government, he had not identified the character of this supreme power; hence he cannot be regarded as the founder of the idea of sovereignty. In his view, the power of the ruler or ruling body was limited by the law which existed above them. Conditions in the Middle Ages were not favourable to the development of the concept of sovereignty because the

emperor's power was limited on the one side by the rights of the feudal lords, and on the other side by the claims of the Pope to superior authority.

The idea of sovereignty made its appearance with the dawn of the modern age. Toward the end of the medieval period a number of causes combined to create new political ideas. The feudal nobles were weakened by the Crusades and by their own quarrels. Commerce and towns destroyed their monopoly of wealth; new methods of warfare destroyed their military supremacy. Taking advantage of their weakness, the king increased his power and importance until he became supreme in the state.

Crusades

In European history, crusades refer to a series of military expeditions made by Christians of West Europe, particularly from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Moslems. They formed a continuous movement, with a constant stream of pilgrims setting out for the Holy Land. The Crusades failed in their military objective. However, they helped to strengthen the power and prestige of the papacy.

Besides, the ruling monarchs of the national states like England and France had achieved a degree of unification and centralization of authority never attained before, so that they freed themselves from the control of the Pope as well. Thus the ground had been prepared for the development of the theory of sovereignty. Jean Bodin, who held Henry III, King of France, in highest esteem, became the exponent of this theory.

II
BODIN AS THE EXPONENT OF SOVEREIGNTY

Jean Bodin (1530-96) was a French philosopher whose stature as a political theorist rests on *The Six Books of a Commonweal* (1576). This work is celebrated for its description of sovereignty as 'the untrammelled and undivided power to make general laws'. No state can properly exist without such power. The location of this supreme legislative power determines whether the state acquires a monarchical, aristocratic or democratic form. Bodin defined sovereignty as 'the absolute and perpetual power of commanding in a state', as the 'supreme power over citizens and subjects unrestrained by law'. Thus Bodin placed the sovereign above law, because he himself is the source of law. This view marked a significant departure from the medieval outlook. The medieval world conceived law as part of the universal and eternal order. Kings, councils and judges who enforced law were themselves under law. They were not empowered to create it. It could only be discovered by a study of custom and precedent. The idea of the state as a source of law was alien to medieval thought.

Bodin sought to reverse the position by making the sovereign himself the

source of all law. Defining the state as an 'aggregation of families and their common possessions ruled by a sovereign power and by reason', Bodin argued that in every independent community governed by law there must be some authority, whether residing in one person or several, whereby the laws themselves are established and from which they proceed.

In Bodin's view, sovereignty did not depend on whether laws were just or not but on the power to make them. This conception of sovereignty allowed no right to subjects to express their consent or resistance to the laws made by the ruler in exercise of his sovereign power. This conception of sovereignty is particularly fit for a system of absolute monarchy which culminated in the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715).

Absolute Monarchy

Absolute monarchy refers to a form of government in which all powers of governance are held by a single ruler—king or queen. Powers of the ruler are not bound by any external limitations, such as those based on custom, precedent, natural law, divine law or judicial interpretations of law. The ruler exercises absolute powers by virtue of his personal authority or his own interpretation of custom, natural law or divine law, etc. This system is opposed to the concept of constitutional government.

Constitutional Government

Constitutional government refers to a form of government in which powers of governance (legislative, executive and judicial powers) are exercised by those who are appointed through the prescribed procedure, in a prescribed manner and under regular legal and political restraints as provided by a constitution. A constitution in this context denotes a set of rules, procedures, practices and conventions which prescribe the structures, functions, powers and responsibilities of different organs of government; the procedure of their formation, working and dissolution; relation between the state and its citizens, etc.

Constitutional government is characterized by the supremacy of law which implies that both public authorities and citizens are equally subject to law and the constitution; all citizens are entitled to equal protection of the laws and they have free access to political and judicial channels for communicating their demands and the redressal of their grievances. In short, a constitutional government stands for a limited, responsive and responsible government. Its principal objective is to secure liberty and justice for the people.

However, it is important to note that *The Six Books of a Commonweal* written by Bodin were not meant to be a treatise on sovereignty, but a description and defence of a Commonweal. He advanced his concept of sovereignty for the identification of different forms of state which were determined by the location of sovereignty. He realized that the character of a government was not directly related to the form of the state. Thus a monarchical state could assume a tyrannical, lordly or just character; an aristocracy could be administered on popular basis; and a democratic

state could employ aristocratic methods.

Bodin commended a 'just monarchy' as the best model of government. In this system, the absolute power of the monarch was moderated by the need to recognize the force of natural law and divine law. Bodin held that a king was all-powerful like God, and like God he was also expected to temper power with justice. Theoretically, the king had the right to make laws without consent of the people, to overrule custom and to ignore the existing social practices, yet he should use such rights with due care and consideration for the welfare of his subjects. Technically the king was not bound to consult his counsellors, yet a just monarchy would base its decisions on the advice of representative institutions. In Bodin's view, common people were not capable of self-government, yet he was equally aware that tyrants only disturb the natural order by generating fear, hatred and dissidence. The chief end of all states was to flourish in piety, justice, valour, honour and virtue.

Bodin treated the sovereign above law but not above duty and moral responsibility. He imposed two important limitations on the powers of the sovereign : (*a*) Firstly, there are some fundamental laws (such as the Salic law of France, which excluded females from dynastic succession) and the sovereign could not lawfully abrogate such laws; and (*b*) Secondly, private property, being granted by the law of nature, was inviolable; therefore, the sovereign could not tax his subjects without their consent.

In a nutshell, though Bodin enunciated the theory of absolute sovereignty for the identification of different forms of state, yet he was equally concerned with the character of a government. His concern for justice and welfare of the people brings him closer to the objectives of a constitutional government.

III
AUSTIN'S THEORY OF SOVEREIGNTY

In the nineteenth century, the theory of sovereignty as a legal concept was perfected by John Austin (1790-1859), English jurist. He is regarded as the greatest exponent of the *monistic* theory of sovereignty. In his *Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (1832) Austin observed :

> If a determinate human superior, not in the habit of obedience to a like superior, receives habitual obedience from the bulk of a given society, that determinate superior is sovereign in that society, and that society (including the superior) is a society political and independent.

Austin's theory of sovereignty was influenced by the then prevailing condition is England. Early adherents of utilitarianism had sought to remove the anomalies of the common law by subordinating it to a superior law which consisted in the universal and permanent dictates of natural reason; the state could neither ignore nor abrogate that superior law. Repudiating these arguments, Austin advanced his theory of *positive law* which expressed the will of the legal sovereign of the state and hence not bound by the dictates of *natural law* or any other superior law.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism refers to a school of thought founded by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), which treats pleasure and pain as the chief motive force behind all human actions. The balance of pleasure over pain derived from a thing or a course of action is termed as 'utility' which is the source of 'happiness'. According to this view, the guiding principle of public policy should be 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'.

Austin sought to define law as the command of the sovereign, obliging the subject to do or refrain from doing, certain acts, failure to obey the law being visited by penalty. Thus, he identified the following characteristics of law:

(*a*) It must emanate from a determinate source, that is the sovereign, to be clearly located in the state;
(*b*) It must be the expression of the command of the sovereign; and
(*c*) It must be backed by sanctions. In other words, disobedience to law must be punishable.

These characteristics are peculiar to the *positive law* of the state, not to be found in natural law, custom or religious commandments. Thus natural law, or for that matter any superior law, is not law in the proper sense of the term. Accordingly, in case a positive law enforced by the state comes into conflict with the natural law or religious commandments, etc., the former must prevail. In this way, Austin established supremacy of the power, authority and commands of the sovereign beyond doubt. He maintained that any rights of the citizens, including the right to property, were nothing but concessions granted by the sovereign. The subjects could have no legal right against the state.

By establishing a single source of all positive law, Austin put forward a *monistic* view of law, state and sovereignty. It is significant that Austin's theory solely dwells on the *legal* character of sovereignty; it does not repudiate moral or social limitations on the power of the state. Austin does not declare the state as a 'perfect embodiment of reason' as the idealist theory had maintained. Austin is an exponent of absolute and unlimited sovereignty purely from the *legal* or *formal* point of view. He admits that sovereign authority habitually observes fundamental moral principles though not legally bound by any external authority. He does not envisage an irresponsible sovereign, but holds that the sovereign cannot be formally made responsible to any authority similar to himself; his authority is legally superior to all individuals and groups within his jurisdiction.

Idealist Theory

Idealist theory refers to the theory of state chiefly advanced by G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831), German philosopher, which eulogizes the state as embodiment of Reason and holds that individual's freedom lies in accepting the dictates of the ideal state. This theory proves disastrous when an existing government is allowed to exercise authority of the ideal state without questioning the character of the persons who form that particular government.

IV
GENESIS OF THE PLURALIST THEORY

The form of sovereignty as developed from Jean Bodin to John Austin was generally regarded as an essential attribute of the modern state till the end of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, it was almost universally admitted that the state is superior to all other human associations in society because sovereignty is exclusive to the state. This implied immense expansion of the powers of the state. This idea was enshrined in the organic theory of the state which glorified the state as the fountain of all moral and social values. The juristic theory went to the extent of evolving a juristic *personality* of the state.

Organic Theory of the State

In this metaphorical expression, the state is compared to an organism or a living body, and individuals are regarded as its organs. An individual separated from the state loses his existence and identity like an organ severed from the body.

However, the socialists—especially Marx and Engels—had demonstrated in the nineteenth century itself, how the economic interests of the dominant class exclusively determined the policy of the state. The rise of capitalism combined with the theory of the absolute state posed a real threat to freedom of the ordinary people in society. Many a thinker expressed serious concern at this state of affairs.

J.N. Figgis *(Churches in the Modern State*; 1913) saw clearly that the ascendance of the absolute state in his own day was directly linked to 'the horror of that very economic and industrial oppression which is the distinctive gift of modern capitalism to history'. Besides, in the twentieth century, there was an all-round development of social sciences which promoted new theories regarding the nature of the state. Modern psychology exploded the myth of the personality of the state which was earlier used to exalt the state and its sovereignty. Modern sociology, again, demonstrated that the law is the product of prevailing social conditions, and not an expression of the commands of the sovereign. This led several modern thinkers to realize that the state is only a partial manifestation of the social nature of man, with a defined sphere of activity. It cannot be treated as an all-comprehensive institution encompassing all aspects of the social life of man as the classical theory of sovereignty had postulated. This gave rise to the pluralist theory which launched a systematic attack on the doctrine of state-sovereignty.

In short, the pluralist theory sought to redefine the nature of the state as one of the several associations of human beings operating in society to secure the multifarious interests of individuals. In view of this, it envisaged a new role for the state as an arbiter over conflicting claims of different associations. It also repudiated the exclusive and absolute claim of the state to individual's allegiance.

It insisted that the state should compete with other human associations to establish its claim to superior authority.

> Every association of any magnitude has grades of authority and control analogous to those of the State.
>
> Robert M. MacIver; *The Modern State* (1926)

It is significant that the pluralist challenge to state-sovereignty coincided with the conditions created by the First World War (1914-18). During wartime the state required its citizens to sacrifice everything — including their near and dear ones, and even their own lives—for the sake of the state. The people did make untold sacrifices, yet this state of affairs prompted an inquiry into whether the state was logically entitled to make such enormous demands. There were men, known as 'conscientious objectors', who claimed that their conscience urged them to oppose bloody war as a means of settling human disputes. Moreover the policy of war was determined by the men in power who were as imperfect and fallible as any other human beings. A little folly on their part could escalate war and bring untold suffering to the citizens of the state. How, then, could the absolute authority of the state be taken for granted?

Harold J. Laski *(A Grammar of Politics;* 1938) enumerated two important factors which prompted the pluralist attack on sovereignty of the state:

(*a*) In the first place, the state claimed legal omnipotence; and it claimed the allegiance of its citizens on the ground that it represented the total interest of the society within its territorial jurisdiction. The pluralists pointed out that legal omnipotence was a purely formal concept often invalid in fact; and they argued that however majestic and powerful, the state in fact was only one of the many associations in society. In actual practice, there were always limits to powers, and these were set by the relation between the purpose the state sought to fulfil and the judgement made by men of that purpose; and

(*b*) In the second place, the pluralist doctrine was derived from the realization that the state's claim to pre-eminence always means, in fact, the sovereignty of a government composed of fallible men whose intentions alone are not a sufficient justification for so vast a claim. There went into the making of pluralism an historic analysis derived from the conflict between churches and the state, between trade unions and the state, between, as in the case of the conscientious objector to military service, the individual and the state.

V
LASKI'S REFORMULATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) is the prominent exponent of the pluralist theory of sovereignty. He is a prolific writer and his views on this subject lie scattered in a

large number of his works: *Authority in the Modern State* (1919); *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (1922); *A Grammar of Politics* (1925/1938); *An Introduction to Politics* (1931); *Studies in Law and Politics* (1932); *The State in Theory and Practice* (1935); *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1943), etc. Though very brilliant, he has not been very consistent in his formulations. After adjusting his pluralist position between liberalism and Marxism, he ultimately emerged as an exponent of positive liberalism—a combination of liberalism and socialism. In his scheme of the reorganization of the state on the basis of democratization of power, Laski comes out as an ardent pluralist.

In the early phase of his political thought, that is in the 1920s, Laski advanced a vigorous criticism of the theory of state sovereignty, and held that this theory would pass like the theory of the divine right of kings which had its day. He thought of sovereignty as nothing more than a legal fiction and a barren concept. But in a later phase, that is in the 1930s. Laski began to evolve a balanced view of pluralism—identifying the points of its strength and weakness, and then he conceded the importance of sovereignty as an essential element of state-power, though he viewed the state itself as an agency for regulating class-relations in society, while he himself preferred a classless society.

Theory of the Divine Right of Kings

This refers to the theory that the authority of the sovereign is derived from God; hence obedience to the State is as imperative as obedience to God. In Europe, this theory was developed during the ascendancy of monarchy. Its chief exponent was Robert Filmer (1588-1653).

ATTACK ON ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY

In his *A Grammar of Politics* (1938), Laski proceeds to scrutinize the theory of sovereignty from three aspects and discovers its weaknesses everywhere: In the first place, historical analysis of the state repudiates the idea of absolute sovereignty. Laski accepts Sir Henry Maine's (1822-88) criticism of Austin and shows how custom and tradition substantially limit the exercise of sovereign power. These are no legal checks imposed by some determinate human superior, nor do they operate with the express or tacit consent of the sovereign himself. The deference which even omnipotent monarchs and sultans have to show to custom, is a political need, a dictate of prudence and expediency. Besides these limitations in the internal sphere, sovereignty is also subject to limitations in the external sphere. Here Laski finds the claims of absolute sovereignty incompatible with the interests of humanity. As he observes :

> In a creative civilization what is important is not the historical accident of separate States, but the scientific fact of world-interdependence. The real unit of allegiance is the world. The real obligation of obedience is to the total interest of our fellow-men (*A Grammar of Politics;* 1938).

In the second place, the theory of absolute sovereignty fails as a theory of law. Here Laski accepts Dicey's (1835-1922) distinction between legal and popular sovereignty as a proof of the absurdity of Austin's definition of sovereignty as

determinate and indivisible. He proceeds to show how even the idea of popular sovereignty is not workable. So Laski asserts:

> Everyone knows that to regard the King-in-Parliament as a sovereign body in the Austinian sense is absurd. No Parliament would dare to disfranchize the Roman Catholics or to prohibit the existence of trade unions. If it made the attempt, it would cease to be a Parliament. That is to say that in practice legally unlimited power turns out to be power exercised under conditions fairly well known to each generation.

Finally, the theory of sovereignty does not hold good in the analysis of a political organization. Laski cites the case of the federal state, particularly of the United States, to show that the location of sovereignty—as envisaged by Austin—is very difficult in the case of such political organizations.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Laski dwells on the distinction between the state and government to demonstrate the inadequacy of the theory of absolute and unlimited sovereignty. He points out that, in actual practice, the so-called sovereign powers of the state are claimed by the government, that is a body of persons issuing orders and enforcing obedience thereto. In the exercise of these powers the government can never be allowed to become absolute and irresponsible. In his *The State in Theory and Practice* (1935), Laski maintained that government is but the agent of the state :

> It exists to carry out the purpose of the state. It is not itself the supreme coercive power; it is simply the mechanism of administration which gives effect to the purpose of that power. It is not, we are told, sovereign in the sense in which the state is sovereign; its competence is defined by such authority as the state may choose to confer upon it; and if it oversteps that authority it may, where such provision exists, be called to account.

Pointing to the dangers of conferring absolute powers on government, Laski further observed :

> Every government is composed of fallible men. They may deliberately exploit the authority they possess for their own selfish purposes. They may, with the best intentions, but quite unreasonably, mistake the private interest of a few for the well-being of the whole community. They may be ignorant of the position they confront, or be incompetent in handling it. Circumstances such as these have occurred in every political society at some period of its history. The value of the distinction between State and government is the possibility it offers of creating institutional mechanisms for changing the agents of the State, that is the government, when the latter shows itself inadequate to its responsibilities.

MORAL GROUNDS OF ALLEGIANCE

In *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (1922), Laski concedes that the State is only one among many forms of human associations and, as compared with other associations, it has no superior claims to an individual's allegiance. He

argues that the State has no right to the allegiance of an individual save insofar as his conscience gives assent. His point is that to demand unquestioning obedience to the orders of the sovereign authority without giving the individual the right to judge for himself their moral adequacy is morally wrong; it stunts the growth of his moral personality.

In his *A Grammar of Politics* (1938), Laski contends that the larger functions of the State postulate larger responsibility as well. The State can justify its existence only as a 'public service corporation':

> The State differs from every other association in that it is, in the first place, an association in which membership is compulsory. It is, in the second place, essentially territorial in nature... The State controls the level at which men are to live as men. It is, in administrative terms, a government whose activities are shaped by the common needs of its members. To satisfy those common needs, it must control other associations to the degree that secures from them the service such needs require.

In other words, the State must justify the exercise of its social authority by ensuring an effective coordination of functions of other human associations in the best public interest. Its claim to the allegiance of individuals will rest on the efficient performance of its functions.

Laski tries to build up the pluralistic character of the State on the basis of the pluralistic character of society itself. He observes that society is not a uniform organization of all citizens. Citizens organize themselves into several associations according to their specific interests and these associations in turn organize themselves into society. Thus society is an association of associations, or a federation of various interest groups. This principle should form the basis of authority of the State. So Laski declares: "...because society is federal, authority must be federal also" *(A Grammar of Politics ;* 1938). In other words, the state should exercise its authority over the various interest groups which constitute it. But each interest group should in turn exercise its authority over its members.

Thus Laski insists that sovereignty in the State should be shared by several groups according to the respective value of the functions of each group. The State should perform its coordinating function, but it has no right to omnipotence. The power of the state should become coordinative instead of being hierarchical, and authority should become federal instead of being absolute and indivisible, *Laski's plea to make authority federal is the cornerstone of his pluralist doctrine.* Its logical conclusion may be found in his concept of the democratization of power.

DEMOCRATIZATION OF POWER

In his pluralist fervour, Laski feels deeply concerned about the undemocratic control of industry and politics by the economic overlords in society—a characteristic feature of capitalist civilization. In his *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1943), Laski most eloquently declares:

> In modern society, the large industrial corporations are controlled by a caste of economic directors, mainly remarkable for their skill in financial manipulation,

who are masters alike of their shareholders and of the consumer, and are not seldom in a position to hold even the states to ransom. Their power is as massive in volume as it has largely been irresponsible in operation. We have reached a stage in historical evolution where either their power must be subordinated to the interest of the community or the interest of the community will be a tragic pseudonym for their power.

This state of affairs cannot be transformed, Laski feels, unless the vital instruments of production are owned and controlled by the community. But he immediately shifts from this Marxist solution to an alternative scheme of democratization of power—a pluralist solution. Laski identifies four bases of economic power: the supply of capital and credit; the ownership and control of land; control of the import and export trades; and, finally, control of transport, fuel and power. Socialization of these vital resources will avert concentration of economic power in society and start the process of the democratization of power.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

The pluralist theory of sovereignty is important because it deals with the problem of sovereignty in the political sphere. It is significant that the classical theory of sovereignty was developed by several thinkers from Jean Bodin to John Austin as a purely legal concept. These thinkers were generally conscious of the moral responsibility of the sovereign, but they did not recognize any human superior whose advise or approval would be necessary for the sovereign. This position could be upheld so long as sovereignty was nothing more than a legal notion.

But once the theory of absolute and unlimited sovereignty is accepted, distinction between the state and government is soon forgotten or ignored and absolute powers are claimed by a government in the name of the state, paving the way for autocracy and tyranny. It is, therefore, quite expedient that the implications of sovereignty in the political sphere are worked out and spelled out so that sound principles of politics and government can be evolved. This is precisely the area where the pluralist theory has made an important contribution.

Exponents of the pluralist theory have elaborated the limitations on the authority of the state—in practice, on the authority of government. Some of the pluralists, like A.D. Lindsay (1879-1952) and Robert M. MacIver (1882-1970) have even declared other associations as objects of deeper individual loyalties than the state. Harold J. Laski has used the pluralist model as a justification to curb the concentration of economic power—a baneful product of capitalism. MacIver (*The Web of Government*; 1965) made an important point by prescribing different roles of the state with regard to the cultural and emotional groups on the one hand, and economic interest groups on the other. He has argued that the state should respect autonomy of the cultural and emotional groups, but it must regulate the activities of the economic interest groups.

There are, however, some dangers inherent in the pluralist theory. When interest groups become the centre of individual loyalty, so much so that some groups attract deeper loyalty than the state itself, there is a danger that some groups might become unduly powerful; they may dictate unjust terms on society because

of this power. For instance, the unions of those performing essential services, such as mechanics, engineers, doctors, dispensers, drivers, and even sweepers, may be able to exert undue pressure on the authorities because they can disrupt normal social life, while teachers, artists, scientists, etc. may not be able to press for their just and genuine demands. Moreover, some categories of persons, such as traders and workers, are usually more organized and vocal than other categories, such as consumers. The pluralist model of government, in such cases, implies pre-eminence of the interests of dominant groups over those of the vulnerable sections of society.

Under the circumstances, responsibility for protecting the common interest devolves on the state. The state should act as an agency for harmonizing the conflicting claims of different interest groups—because some groups might be unduly eloquent in advancing their claims while others might not be even conscious of their interests, not to speak of properly organizing and articulating their genuine interests. The state should, therefore, determine the requirements of the common interest in admitting the respective claims of the various interest groups.

Again, with the ascendancy of big corporations in the modern state, the position of other groups has considerably weakened. The giant corporations have, in fact, eclipsed other social groups as regards their influence on the policy-making process. Under such circumstances, public policy can hardly be regarded as an end-product of mutual adjustment of group interests. In order to restore the rightful place of smaller groups *vis-a-vis* the bigger ones, the state must play an effective role in curbing the powers and influence of the more powerful organs, particularly the big corporations. This would call for a stronger base for the state sovereignty than what the pluralist theory might concede.

VI
CONTEXT OF KAUTILYA

A parallel is sometimes drawn between the Western concept of sovereignty and the political thought of Kautilya. Kautilya was an ancient Indian philosopher, the celebrated author of *Arthashastra* (The Science of Polity). Historians have demonstrated that 'Kautilya' was the pen-name of Chanakya, the great Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya in the fourth century BC. Chanakya was also the author of several treatises on ethics and statecraft, including *Chanakya Sutrani* (Maxims of Chanakya) and *Chanakya Rajaniti Shastram* (Chanakya's Guide to Politics). All these works, taken together, mark a departure from the earlier Indian tradition which was characterized by the supremacy of religion in all spheres of life. Kautilya proceeded to declare the independent status of the polity and to focus on its importance in social life. The situation was somewhat similar to sixteenth-century Europe when the supremacy of religion in all spheres of life was challenged by the concept of state sovereignty.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty refers to the supreme legal authority which is regarded an essential element of the State. It is by virtue of this authority that a State can make binding laws, command obedience to its orders, and punish those who fail to obey its orders. Only a sovereign State can enter into treaty with other States and conduct war against enemy States.

Traditional Indian philosophy recognized four *Purusharthas,* that is the principal objects of human life, namely *Dharma* (the virtue promoted by religion), *Artha* (wealth or material prosperity promoted by polity), *Kama* (sensual enjoyments promoted by art and culture) and *Moksha* (final liberation or emancipation of soul promoted by penance). Indian social life preceding Kautilya was characterized by the primacy of *Dharma* which was regulated by *Dharmashastra,* that is the treatise on duties of man as determined by religion. Pursuit of the other objects of human life, namely *Artha, Kama* and *Moksha* was incidental to the pursuit of *Dharma.* Similarly, the discourse on other objects of human life was part of the discourse on *Dharma.*

So before Kautilya the knowledge concerning the science of polity was lying scattered in several works. Moreover, this knowledge did not enjoy an independent status as it was subservient to the knowledge of *Dharma.* Kautilya, at the outset, sought to consolidate this knowledge and present it in the form of *Arthashastra* for the guidance of princes and statesmen. Thus the opening sentence of *Arthasashstra,* after salutation to the divine teachers of polity, reads:

> This *Arthashastra* is made as a compendium of almost all the *Arthashastras,* which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of the earth, have been composed by ancient teachers.

Towards the end of the work, Kautilya repeats this statement in a slightly different way:

> This *Arthashastra* or Science of Polity has been made as a compendium of all those *Arthashastras* which, as a guidance to kings in acquiring and maintaining the earth, have been written by ancient teachers.

Kautilya was of course one of the most original thinkers of ancient India. He withheld his claim to originality probably for two reasons : (*a*) It was symptomatic of his modesty; and (*b*) He wished to make his work authoritative by invoking the names of ancient authorities. Nevertheless by introducing a new, consolidated *Arthashastra* as authoritative as *Dharmashastra,* he sought to raise the status *Artha* (material prosperity)—the second principal object of human life to the level of *Dharma* (religious duty)—the first principal object of human life. While the earlier references to the science of polity largely dwelled on the duties of kings, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was meant for the guidance of kings who desired to acquire and maintain the earth. In fact, it was the first manual on statecraft and the art of administration.

Another equivalent of science of polity prevalent in ancient India was

Dandaniti which refers to the art of using force to control the errant elements in society. *Danda, i.e.* the rod as a symbol of force or state power is mentioned in the old texts like *Manusmriti,* the work of Ushnas and *Mahabharata,* but Kautilya has given an elaborate exposition of *Dandaniti.* Kautilya made a clear distinction between religion and politics and nowhere does he evaluate political problems in terms of religious thought. While recognizing the vital importance of religion in social life, he was bold enough to assert that *Dandaniti* should form the basis of *Purushartha* (the effort to achieve the principal objects of human life). He stressed the value of human endeavour in securing the best in his life. He contended that history was no longer the result of the vengeance or jealousy of superhuman powers but the expression of human ingenuity. He asserted that things should not be allowed to be governed by chance.

Kautilya identified four purposes of *Dandaniti:* (*a*) Acquisition of the unacquired; (*b*) Preservation of the acquired; (*c*) Augmentation of the preserved; and (*d*) Fair distribution of the augmented. Only a strong and disciplined prince could fully achieve these purposes. Politically, Kautilya was the champion of a strong monarchy and stable imperialist state. His state was to be paternal in character and benevolent in spirit. The main function of the state was to foster the material and spiritual progress. It was to regulate all branches of human life. It was to maintain the respective privileges of all and to protect them from the tyranny of more powerful sections. Kautilya regarded monarchy as the best human institution and also as the custodian of the national resources and public rights.

In exalting polity as the supreme social institution, Kautilya went to the extent of claiming that of the four *Purusharthas* (principal objects of human life), *Artha* (material prosperity which was fostered by the state) was the most important. He assigned the duty of maintenance of *Dharma* (religious order) to king himself. *Kama* (sensual enjoyments) could be attained only under a congenial atmosphere to be maintained by the state. And finally, *Moksha* (final liberation of soul) could be achieved only when the first three objects have been accomplished. Thus achievement of all the four principal objects of human life was dependent on the proper functioning of the state. In a nutshell, Kautilya sought to replace the primacy of religion prevailing in his times by advancing the claim of state sovereignty.

Q 1. Critically examine Bodin's theory of absolute sovereignty. Is it compatible with the objectives of a constitutional government?

2. Write a critical note on the concept of sovereignty with special reference to Austin's theory of sovereignty.

3. Examine the pluralistic theory of sovereignty with special reference to Laski's view.

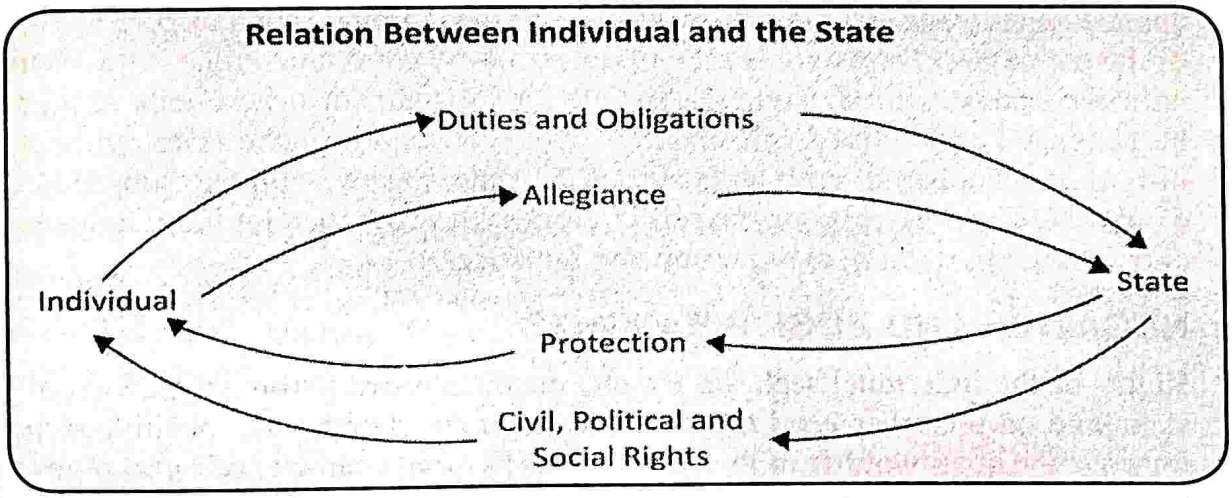
4. Examine Kautilya's claim as an exponent of State sovereignty in ancient India.

4

Individual and the State

I
RELATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

Relation between individual and the state is an important issue of political philosophy. It is essential to note at the outset that in the present context the term 'individual' stands for the citizen, and the term 'state' stands for that abstract entity which represents sovereign authority. Citizen is a full and responsible member of the political community while the state embodies the power structure of that community. Thus individual and state are interdependent. Individual owes allegiance to the state; he undertakes to obey the state's law and commands and to fulfil his duties and obligations which sustain the state. The state on the other hand gives protection to the individual and safeguards his civil, political and social rights which are necessary to sustain the individual. Hence relation between individual and the state is a two-way relationship as shown in the following diagram :



In other words, if we focus on rights and duties of individual in the state, we will largely cover the whole gamut of relations between individual and state. Rights and duties are interdependent. They are two sides of the same coin. Proper balance between the two is necessary to sustain each of them. The debate whether

'individual for the state' or 'state for the individual' is meaningless. No state can maintain any rights unless individuals perform their duty. No individual will support the state sincerely until his rights are properly protected. If a state uses force or terror to extract obedience from individuals, it cannot maintain its power for long.

II
CONCEPT OF RIGHTS

When we define the state as a power structure, two conditions should be fulfilled to maintain its legitimacy: (*a*) It should not use its power to curb individual's freedom unless it is necessary to maintain public order and public safety, etc.; and (*b*) It should use its power and resources to promote welfare of the individual. This idea gives rise to rights of the individual. Harold J. Laski (*A Grammar of Politics;* 1938) has significantly observed: "Every State is known by the rights that it maintains. Our method of judging its character lies, above all, in the contribution that it makes to the substance of man's happiness." In short, *rights refer to the claims of the individual on the state for creating the conditions of his happiness without compromising others' happiness.*

It is important to note that *the benefits which flow automatically from the existence of the state do not constitute rights.* Rights come into the picture only when authority of the state is sought to be restricted, or when individuals and their groups demand a positive role of the state in securing their welfare. Thus, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) and G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) may have paid rich tributes to the state, in their own ways, for creating congenial conditions for the happiness of men, but they failed to evolve any concept of rights. Absence of rights makes happiness of individuals depend on the chance benevolence of the powers-that-be. If there are no rights to curb authority of the government and to prescribe functions of the government, the state assumes unbridled power. It may soon degenerate into absolutism, where individual may be subjected to arbitrary will of the state. Glorification of the state, without an in-built mechanism to curb authority of the state, means complete subordination of individual to the ruler or the ruling groups, thereby opening the floodgates of corruption, oppression, exploitation and injustice.

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE RIGHTS

Rights of the individual seek, on the one hand, to restrict arbitrary powers of the state, and on the other hand they impress upon the state to take positive steps to improve the quality of life of its citizens. This twofold character of rights gives rise to the identification of two types of rights: Negative Rights and Positive Rights.

Negative rights suggest the sphere where the state is not permitted to enter. They suggest the sphere of freedom of individual which shall not be encroached by the state. Positive rights, on the other hand, prescribe responsibility of the state in securing rights of individuals. They require the state to take positive measures

for the protection of rights of the weaker and vulnerable sections or those placed in a vulnerable position. In fact, the negative and positive rights should be treated as parts *of a continuum*, not as distinct entities.

Continuum

Continuum refers to a logical device for representing a range of variables which fall between two opposites. It is based on the assumption that though the two opposites are situated on extreme positions, like the two ends of a straight line, yet they are linked with each other so that they provide for easy access from one extreme to the other. The two banks of a river, connected by an overbridge, may be cited as an example of a continuum.

Broadly speaking, negative rights indicate as to which acts of the individual shall not be restricted by the state. Thus 'freedom of thought and expression' implies that the state shall not impose any restriction on individual's thought and expression. So it comes in the category of negative rights. But if we say that the state shall provide for universal education to promote its citizens' faculty of thought and expression, it will be described as their positive right. In short, positive rights indicate the steps taken by the state to improve the quality of life of its citizens and to help them in their self-development. For example, the right to medical care, right to work, right to legal aid, etc. also qualify as positive rights. *A capitalist state gives precedence to negative rights while a socialist state gives precedence to positive rights. A welfare state aims at combining negative rights with positive rights as far as feasible.*

Welfare State

Welfare state refers to a state that safeguards liberty of its citizens and also provides various types of social services for them, *e.g.* social security (financial assistance in the case of loss of job or any other source of income, death of the bread-winner, prolonged illness or physical disability or any other calamity), free education, public health, poor relief, supply of essential goods and services like foodgrains, milk, fuel and transport to the needy at subsidized rates. It undertakes the protection of cultural heritage including monuments, museums, libraries, art galleries, botanical gardens and zoological parks, etc. It also promotes higher education and scientific research, etc. to step up intellectual and cultural development of society.

CIVIL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

Present-day welfare state recognizes three types of rights of the citizen : Civil, Political and Social (or Social-Economic) Rights. These rights have gradually evolved in the modern times. Several institutions have also been evolved for the implementation of these rights. T.H. Marshall *(Citizenship and Social Class*; 1950) has given a vivid account of the evolution of these rights in England since the eighteenth century. At the first stage, civil rights were evolved in the eighteenth century. These included: equality before the law; personal liberty; freedom of

speech, thought and faith; the right to own property and enter into contracts. Protection of these rights was assigned to courts.

At the second stage, political rights were evolved in the nineteenth century. These included: the right to take part in elections, the right to serve in bodies invested with political authority, whether legislatures or cabinets. Maintenance of these rights became the function of representative political institutions.

Finally at the third stage, social rights were developed in the twentieth century. These included: the right to a certain standard of economic and social welfare, the right to a full share in the social heritage. Maintenance of these rights became the responsibility of social services and schools. Thus the evolution of rights in England culminated in the development of the welfare state.

Evolution of Rights In England
(as identified by T.H. Marshall)

Period of Evolution	*Nature of Rights*	*Protective Institutions*
Eighteenth Century	Civil Rights	Courts
Nineteenth Century	Political Rights	Representative Institutions
Twentieth Century	Social Rights	Social Services and Schools

An effective provision of civil rights requires that the benefit of these rights should be extended equally to minorities and majorities. In other words, while making provision of these rights no discrimination should be made between different citizens on racial, religious, linguistic, gender or any other similar ground. If any group, particularly a minority group, faces such discrimination, it can resort to a civil rights movement to secure restoration of these rights. For instance, the American Negroes (the black citizens) had to resort to such movement. They had to fight for the enforcement of those rights which existed in law but denied to them in actual practice. The American Supreme Court had allowed them unrestricted use of public property and unrestricted entry into public institutions way back in 1954. But they had to endure a prolonged struggle for the enforcement of these rights throughout the United States. As a result of their mass movement, Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 forbidding racial discrimination in employment, education, or accommodation.

Similarly, an effective provision of political rights requires that all citizens should be eligible to gain political office through a prescribed procedure; ordinary people should be able to elect the rulers of their choice, to replace the unwanted rulers, to influence public decisions, to criticize public policies, decisions and actions, and to offer alternative policies and programmes. In communist countries (like the People's Republic of China and the former USSR), political power

remained the monopoly of one party—the Communist Party. They held regular elections, but the ruling party had the exclusive right to nominate candidates. Ordinary people in these countries indeed had no choice, nor the capacity to replace the power-holders. So the citizens of these countries did not have political rights in the true sense of the term although they dubbed their system a 'people's republic'. In 1989 when thousands of students demonstrated at Tiananman Square in China's capital city, demanding their democratic rights, they were declared to be rebels and many of them were shot dead.

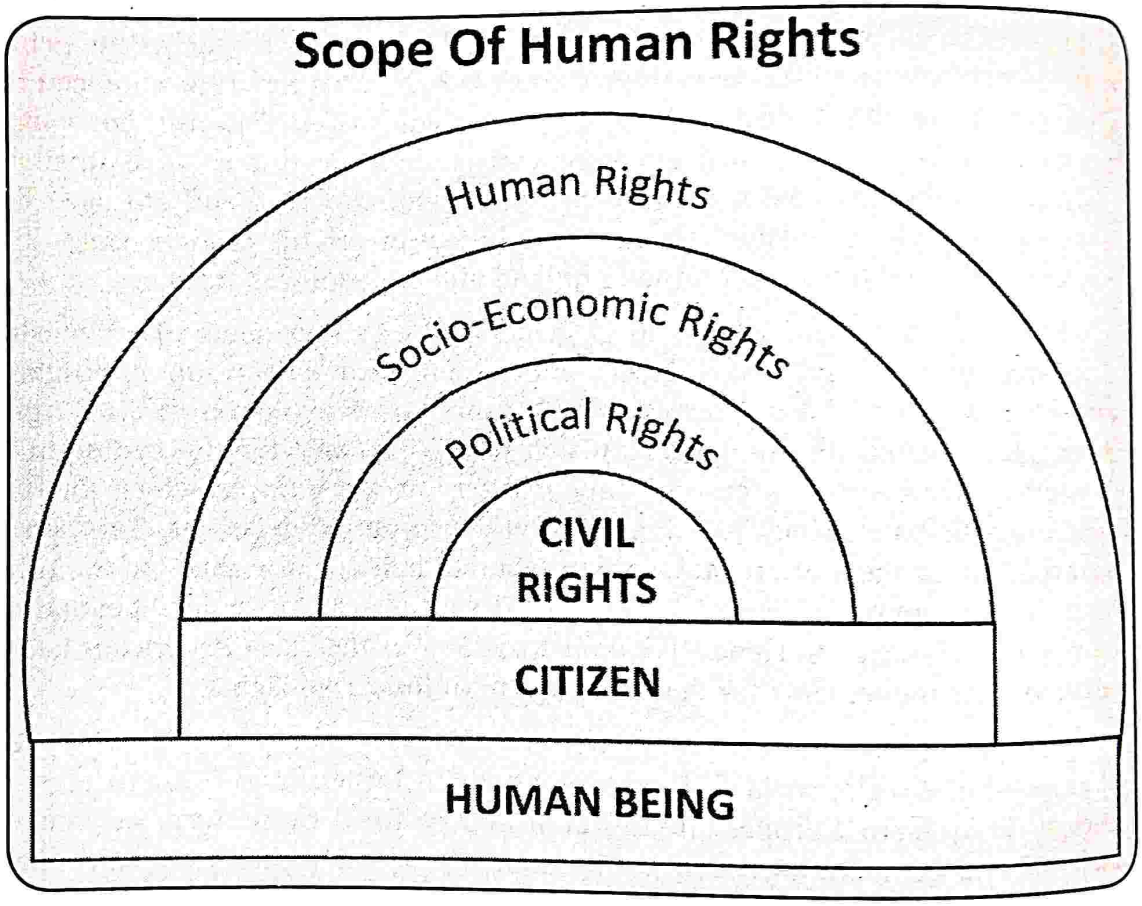
Finally, social rights of citizens are largely provided in a welfare state. In nineteenth-century Europe, functions of the state were largely confined to the maintenance of law and order. It was dubbed a 'night-watchman state'. It was regarded to be an instrument of safeguarding property of its citizens. Its power of taxation was largely determined by the needs of performing this function. The idea of the welfare state originated in Germany in the nineteenth century itself as a programme of 'social insurance' under Prince Bismarck. It was introduced in England in early twentieth century under H.H. Asquith. It reached its zenith with the publication of the Beveridge Report (1942). This report pronounced the objective of the state to tackle the five 'Giant Evils': *Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor* and *Idleness.* Special attention was paid to the provision of financial assistance to the citizens in case of unemployment, sickness and old age. The Beveridge Report furnished an excellent blueprint for the welfare state. The implementation of this report turned England into a model welfare state.

It is important to note that in England various components of citizenship developed in a logical order. Hence the structure of citizenship in England can serve as a model for other countries. Initially the evolution of civil rights in England created an atmosphere which paved the way for the evolution of democracy. Democracy secured political rights of the citizens which enabled them to participate in public life and to influence public decisions. This led to the evolution of the welfare state which secured their social rights. On the other hand, the concept of citizenship in the United States hardly developed beyond the provision of civil rights. Hence, the women as well as the black Americans had to resort to mass movements for the enforcement of their civil rights.

It is again worth noting that after the Second World War (1939-45), the concept of citizenship developed in different directions in Eastern and Western parts of Europe. In Western Europe, initially civil and political rights were established under liberal-democratic systems. Subsequently social rights were introduced under welfare state system in order to curb the inegalitarian tendencies of the capitalist economy. But in Eastern Europe, initially elaborate provision of social and economic rights of citizens was made under communist dictatorships, and their civil and political rights were heavily curtailed. From 1989 the citizens of these countries (Hungry, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania and Russia) launched widespread anti-establishment movements in support of their demand for basic civil and political rights, which led to the collapse of communist system by 1991.

III
HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are those rights to which an individual is entitled by virtue of his status as a human being. While civil, political and social-economic rights are dependent on an individual's status as a citizen of a particular state, his human rights are not determined by this condition. Thus the scope of human rights is very wide. They set the standards for the provision and expansion of civil, political and social-economic rights. Again, *where an individual's civil, political and social-economic rights are exhausted, he can still hope to get some relief under the umbrella of human rights.* For instance, a foreigner, a refugee, a prisoner-of-war or a proclaimed offender may have been left without ordinary rights, yet the beneficent hand of human rights will not be withdrawn from over his head.



Human rights constitute the very source of all rights of human beings. They embody the scheme of ideal rights. They provide for moral foundation of any system of rights. In a way they are akin to the concept of justice. As the idea of justice determines the principles on which law should be based, so the idea of human rights sets the standards on which all other rights should be based. Moreover, when ordinary rights are reinterpreted in the light of human rights, they enter the ever-expanding domain of human welfare. For instance, the right to life in this context may be interpreted to include the right to live on uncontaminated

land, to breathe in clean air and to consume clean water; and government may be held responsible to satisfy these conditions. Nevertheless, human rights can only be realized as 'rights'. In other words, human rights, like any other rights, have to be enforced by a state or an international tribunal who should be capable of enforcing them. Anybody who claims any human rights must prove himself to be law-abiding and must submit himself to law for appropriate justice. Smugglers, terrorists and international criminals are not entitled to any human rights until they surrender themselves before an appropriate judicial authority.

IV
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In 1948, the United Nations issued an elaborate list of human rights, known as 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. It advised its member-nations to give a wide publicity to these rights in their respective countries, particularly in schools and other educational institutions. This declaration is best suited to building up a free, democratic, welfare state. It embodies a comprehensive scheme of human rights.

This declaration contains 30 articles, apart from its Preamble. Its Preamble states that the recognition of the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings and their inalienable rights is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind. The advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief, and freedom from fear and want is the highest aspiration of the common people. If man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, it is essential that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

Rule of Law

Rule of Law refers to the principle which requires that the law of the land should be properly notified so that the citizens know as to how it will affect them; any action against an individual should be taken only under that law, and not on any other basis. Hence no one should be arbitrarily arrested, nor punished without a fair trial.

In order to promote the development of friendly relations between nations, the United Nations Charter reaffirmed the faith of its members in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women. It was determined to promote social progress and universal respect for observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The present declaration gives prominence to civil and political rights of human beings and legal protection thereof. Then it pays due importance to their social-economic rights. In order to strengthen the foundation of these rights, it also enumerates individual's duties toward the community.

Articles 1 and 2 focus on rational nature of all human beings and reaffirm faith in their dignity, freedom, equality and fraternity. They rule out any discrimination between them on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other type of status.

Articles 3 and 4 provide for everyone's right to life, liberty and security of person; prohibition of slavery, slave trade and servitude. Article 5 rules out torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to any person.

Articles 6 to 11 provide for equality before the law, equal protection against any discrimination, legal remedy, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, and adherence to fair legal procedure in case a person is accused.

Article 12 rules out arbitrary interference with an individual's privacy, family, home or correspondence, and attacks upon his honour and reputation.

Articles 13 and 14 provide for the right to freedom of movement and residence and the right to seek asylum from persecution in other countries.

Article 15 provides for the right to a nationality; Article 16 for the right to marry and found a family with the free and full consent of the intending spouses; and Article 17 for the right to own property.

Articles 18, 19 and 20 provide for the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 21 provides for the right to take part in the government of one's country through one's chosen representatives and the right of equal access to public service. It also recommends that the will of the people, expressed in periodic and genuine elections, by universal and equal suffrage, by secret voting, shall be the basis of authority of government. In this way this Article regards democratic form of government as an essential feature of human rights.

It is worth-noting that Articles 1 to 21 of the present declaration embody an elaborate scheme to provide for civil, political and legal rights of all human beings all over the world.

On the other hand, Articles 22 to 26 provide for social and economic rights of the individual. These include the right to social security, right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, equal pay for equal work, just and favourable remuneration, right to form trade unions, right to rest and leisure, adequate standard of living, special care and assistance during motherhood and childhood, and right to education.

Article 27 provides for cultural rights including the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, and author's right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from his scientific, literary or artistic production.

Article 28 focuses on everyone's entitlement to a social and international order in which all these rights and freedoms can be fully realized. This article is concerned with the sphere of application of the rights in question.

Finally, Articles 29 and 30 focus on everyone's duties to the community to ensure full development of his personality. Any individual would be entitled to the aforesaid rights and freedoms on the condition of recognizing similar rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. No state, group or person would have any right to engage in any activity involving the destruction of any of these rights and freedoms.

It is important to note that India, as an active member of the United Nations and as an ardent champion of human rights, has given due recognition to the contents of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is manifested in various parts of the Indian Constitution (1950, as amended from time to time), including its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties. The Supreme Court of India has cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in some of its judgements from time to time in order to promote democratic spirit and social justice. Government of India has set up a National Human Rights Commission since 1993 in order to promote awareness about these rights and to ensure their protection. This Commision has been doing a commendable job since its inception.

V
CONTEXT OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

The Indian Constitution (1950, as amended from time to time) gives due importance to the rights of citizens. At the outset, Preamble to the Constitution expresses a solemn resolve to secure to the citizens of India Justice — social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation. Then Part III (Articles 12 to 35) and Part IV (Articles 36 to 51) provide for Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy respectively.

Fundamental Rights stand for the basic rights of citizens which cannot be taken away or abridged under any law of the land. Directive Principles of State Policy enunciate the duty of the State to apply certain principles in the governance of the country and in making laws. These principles enjoin upon the State to secure a social order designed to promote welfare of the people. Inclusion of the duty of the State in this Constitution implies the provision of additional rights of the citizens. Thus these two parts of the Constitution embody the two vital aspects of rights of citizens, *viz.* securing their equality and freedom, and promoting their welfare.

Fundamental Rights are divided into elaborate provisions concerning specific rights. Right to Equality (Articles 14 to 18) includes equality before the law; prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth; equality of opportunity in matters of public employment; abolition of untouchability; and abolition of titles. Prohibition of discrimination shall not stand in the way of making any special provision for weaker sections like women,

children, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment shall not prevent the State from prescribing any requirement as to residence within a State in regard to a class or classes of employment, or making reservation for backward classes of citizens, or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, etc. In short, any departure from the principle of strict equality will be allowed only to accommodate the principle of 'protective discrimination'.

Protective Discrimination

Protective discrimination refers to the principle under which relatively strong and well-off sections of society may be denied equal opportunities and benefits in order to protect the interests of weaker and poor sections. It is necessary to see that the application of this principle does not result in reversal of the condition of the former rich and poor sections.

Scheduled Castes

Under Hindu caste system, Scheduled Castes refers to the people who were engaged in unclean occupations and treated as outcaste. They were the victims of the practice of untouchability. Government of India had published official lists or schedules of such castes in order to draw programmes of their welfare and to provide for special protection to them. That is why they are called the Scheduled Castes.

Scheduled Tribes

Scheduled Tribes refer to the tribes of India who were living in forests, hills, etc. or wandering from place to place, having little contact with civilized society. These tribes remained out of touch with modern education, professions and life-styles. Government of India had published official lists or schedules of these tribes in order to draw programmes of their welfare and to provide for special protection to them. That is why they are called the Scheduled Tribes.

Untouchability

Untouchability refers to a widespread practice of orthodox Hindu society under which certain outcaste Hindus were treated as untouchable by the caste Hindus; their touch was believed to pollute the caste Hindus; they were refused entry into temples, and were not allowed to use common wells, ponds, inns and other common services.

Right to Freedom (Articles 19 to 22) includes right to freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peaceably and without arms, to form associations or unions, to move freely throughout the territory of India, to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India, and to practise any profession, to carry on any occupation, trade or business; protection in respect of conviction for offences; protection of life and personal liberty; and protection against arrest and detention without being informed of the grounds for such arrest and without being produced

before the nearest magistrate within twenty-four hours of such arrest. However it was provided that the right to freedom shall not prevent the State from making any law imposing reasonable restrictions thereon in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, etc. Freedom of movement and residence could also be restricted for the protection of the interests of any Scheduled Tribe. The State could also restrict the freedom of profession by prescribing necessary professional or technical qualifications for particular professions.

Originally the right to freedom also included the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property, but this was dropped under the forty-fourth amendment of the Constitution (1978) when Right to Property was no longer retained as a Fundamental Right. Then during the course of working of the Constitution, freedom of speech and expression was placed on a stronger foundation through the enactment of Right to Information Act (2005). The operation of this Act has brought some transparency in the functioning of public administration. This has benefited many in seeking redressal of their genuine grievances.

It is important to note that in pursuance of Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 45), Right to Education was included in Fundamental Rights for all children of the age of six to fourteen years (Article 21A) by the eighty-sixth amendment of the Constitution (2002). This was followed up by the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Implementation of this Act has substantially contributed to expansion of educational opportunities for children of the poor, particularly in rural India. But it is suffering from many teething troubles. The quality of education so provided is very poor, due to dearth of good teachers and buildings. Then many people are not willing to send their children to school as they are engaged in labour at house and in the field.

Right against Exploitation (Articles 23 to 24) includes prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour; and prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc. Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25 to 28) includes freedom of conscience and freedom to profess, practise and propagate religion; freedom to manage religious affairs; freedom as to payment of taxes on the funds meant for the promotion of any particular religion; and freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions maintained out of state funds.

Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29 to 30) include the right of minorities to conserve their distinct language, script or culture; and their right to get admission into any educational institution receiving aid out of State funds; their right to establish and administer educational institutions; and prohibition of discrimination in granting aid to their educational institutions,

Right to Property, originally provided under Fundamental Rights (Article 31), was subsequently repealed by the forty-fourth amendment of the Constitution (1978), because of the prolonged dispute between Indian Parliament and the Supreme Court regarding the status of this right in the context of the measures meant to secure social justice. This right has now been retained as a legal right by inserting Article 300A under Part XII of the Constitution (Finance, Property,

Contracts and Suits). It provides that no person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law. It means that when the State decides to acquire any private property in public interest, particularly for giving effect to the policy of social justice, it can go ahead to make necessary law which cannot be challenged as the violation of the fundamental 'Right to Property'.

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

Finally, Right to Constitutional Remedies (Articles 32 to 35) makes elaborate provisions regarding remedies for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights; power of Parliament to modify the Fundamental Rights in their application to the members of the Armed Forces; restriction of the Fundamental Rights while martial law is in force in any area; and the legislation to give effect to the Fundamental Rights of citizens.

Directive Principles of State Policy as provided in Part IV of the Constitution (Articles 36 to 51) furnish an elaborate blueprint of a welfare state devoted to social justice. These provisions are not enforceable by any court, but they are 'nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws' (Article 37). They enjoin upon the State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people (Article 38). Again they direct the State to secure to its citizens the right to an adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work for men and women, to prevent any threats to the health and strength of workers and other citizens, to prevent exploitation of childhood and youth, etc. (Article 39, a, d, e, f). They direct the State to ensure that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; and that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment (Article 39, b, c). When the measures taken under this directive (*e.g.* the Zamindari Abolition Acts, Bank Nationalization and Abolition of Privy Purses, etc.) were continually challenged in the courts, largely as abridging the Fundamental Right to Property, the conflict was sought to be resolved through a series of constitutional amendments, culminating in the repeal of Right to Property as a Fundamental Right (1978).

The directive on the provision of equal justice and free legal aid (Article 39A) was inserted by the forty-second amendment of the Constitution (1976). Other Directive Principles deal with diverse subjects, like organization of village panchayats (Article 40); provision of right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want (Article 41); provision of just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42); and provision of living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure

and social and cultural opportunities for all types of workers.

The directive to ensure participation of workers in management of industries (Article 43A) was again introduced by the forty-second amendment of the Constitution (1976). Another provision directs the State to endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India (Article 44).

The original directive for the provision of free and compulsory education for children till the age of fourteen years (Article 45) became redundant with the provision of Right to Education under Fundamental Rights (Article 21 A). Hence it was replaced by the directive concerning provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years, by the eighty-sixth amendment of the Constitution (2002).

Then Right to Work was sought to be secured to the citizens as far as feasible, by the enactment of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (now known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act : MGNREGA). It aims to provide an assured job involving unskilled manual work for 100 days per year at least to one adult of each rural family, or unemployment allowance in lieu of it. Implementation of this Act has brought some improvement in the condition of the rural labour. It has reduced the migration of labour from villages to cities in many States. However, it has failed to bring about the desired results, largely due to administrative corruption and ignorance. Moreover, jobs have not been created according to a well-thought out plan. It may be hoped that in due course more attention will be paid to the development of rural infrastructure that would enhance overall welfare of the people.

Another landmark in securing welfare of the people has been the enactment of National Food Security Act, 2013. It aims to provide subsidized foodgrains to approximately two-thirds of India's population who are very poor. Implementation of this Act has brought some sense of security among the poor. But its overall performance has been far from satisfactory. The quality of food so provided has been very poor. It is also alleged that this provision has made people dependent on government subsidy and killed the incentive to do hard work.

Other Directive Principles insist on promotion of educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections (Article 46); duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health (Article 47); and organization of agriculture and animal husbandry (Article 48). Then the new directive for the protection and improvement of environment and safeguarding of forests and wild life (Article 48 A) was inserted by the forty-second amendment of the Constitution (1976).

Finally, we have directives on the protection of monuments and places and objects of national importance (Article 49); separation of judiciary from executive (Article 50); and promotion of international peace and security (Article 51).

In a nutshell, Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy, as they stand today in the text of the Indian Constitution, have enough scope to create conditions which will be conducive to the self-development of Indian citizens. They can serve as model provisions for the nations devoted to freedom, equality

and social justice.

VI
DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Rights and duties are two sides of the same coin. No one can have any right unless others perform their duty. No one shall perform his duty unless others respect his rights. We perform our duty toward each other and get our rights in return. My right to have way at a cross-road will have no meaning unless those coming from the other side stop when my turn comes. Similarly, I shall be obliged to stop when it is the turn of people coming from the other side. So duty implies obligation. D.D. Raphael *(Problems of Political Philosophy ;* 1976) has adequately shown the relationship between right and obligation while illustrating synthesis of concepts as follows :

> By synthesis of concepts I mean showing the logical relationship whereby one concept implies or is implied by another; for example, one can show a logical relationship between the concept of a right and that of an obligation by pointing out that whenever *A* has a right against *B*, this implies that *B* has an obligation.

In political philosophy, a citizen's obligation to obey the laws made by the state or the orders issued by the state is described as *'political obligation'*. It is argued that if the state is responsible to protect rights of the individual and to promote his welfare, the individual should also reciprocate by giving due respect to law and orders of the state. In fact, authority of the state and political obligation of the individual are interdependent. If the state fails to protect individuals and to promote their welfare, it will fail to command their obedience. Conversely, if individuals fail to respect law and orders of the state, they will fail to maintain a state that protects them and promotes their welfare. If a state deprives individuals of their liberty, it erodes its own potential for excellence. As John Stuart Mill (1806-73), in his famous essay *On Liberty* (1859), has significantly observed:

> A state which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.

The interdependence of rights and duties is also evident in the sphere of relations between different sections of society. When one section insists on its rights, disregarding its duty towards others, it results in conflict and tension in society. If people could be trained to think in terms of their duties, their rights would be automatically secured and all tension will eventually disappear. Focus on rights and duties corresponds to inclination towards politics and ethics respectively. In politics, we are moved by the idea of our rights and claims against others. In ethics, we are moved by the sense of our duty and responsibility towards others. Pursuit of politics gives rise to conflict and tension; pursuit of ethics brings peace and harmony. Indulgence in politics tends to disturb social order; adherence to

ethics tends to strengthen social order. *If our politics could be founded on ethics, all our conflicts would be resolved peacefully and effectively.*

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher, has dwelled at length on relation between rights and duties. Writing in *Harijan* (1947), Gandhi pointed to one great evil that was afflicting society at that time, and which continues to afflict society even today in some form or the other. Gandhi wrote:

> The capitalist and the zamindar talk of their rights, the labourer on the other hand of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.

Gandhi firmly believed that rights and duties were dependent on each other. No one could have an absolute right as no one could be bound by an absolute duty. There is no such thing as the divine right of kings to rule and the humble duty of ryots to pay respectful obedience to their masters. Illustrating the correlation between rights and duties, Gandhi further observed:

> I venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations, sooner discarded the better. A wretched parent who claims obedience from his children without first doing his duty towards them excites nothing but contempt. It is a distortion of religious precepts for a dissolute husband to expect compliance in every respect from his dutiful wife. But the children who flout their parent who is ever ready to do his duty towards them would be considered ungrateful and would harm themselves more than their parent. The same can be said about husband and wife.

Gandhi proceeds to apply this principle of mutual obligation and reciprocal rights to the relations between employers and labourers, landlords and tenants, the princes and their subjects as well as between the Hindus and the Muslims living in India. If people could be made to understand this principle and follow it in their behaviour, the happiest relations would be established in all walks of life without disturbing life and business in India as well as other parts of the world.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Indian statesman and political thinker, pointed to the correlation between rights and duties on several occasions. In his Broadcast to the Nation (1948), Nehru pointed out:

> There has been far too much emphasis on rights and far too little on obligations; if obligations were undertaken, rights would naturally flow from them.

The growing realization of the importance of duties led to the introduction of Fundamental Duties (Article 51 A) in the Constitution of India by the forty-second amendment (1976). This was supplemented by the eighty-sixth amendment of the Constitution (2002). Accordingly, it shall be the duty of every citizen of India : (*a*) To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem; (*b*) To cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom; (*c*) To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India; (*d*) To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so; (*e*) To promote harmony and the spirit of common

brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women; (*f*) To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture; (g) To protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures; (*h*) To develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform; (*i*) To safeguard public property and to abjure violence; (*j*) To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement; and finally, (*k*) It will be the duty of every parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward as the case may be, between the age of six and fourteen years.

This elaborate list of fundamental duties is meant to appeal to the conscience of Indian citizens. If they respond positively to this appeal, they will surely contribute to the creation of a social order where their rights will be automatically secured.

VII
CONCEPT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

In the contamporary world, the idea of accountability is widely invoked to regulate the relation between individual and the state. Broadly speaking, three aspects of accountability are particularly important in the study of social and political philosophy: political accountability, administrative accountability, and moral accountability.

Political accountability or public accountability operates in the sphere of politics, particularly in a democracy. It refers to the duty of the rulers and political representatives of the people to justify their conduct or actions before the public in order to prove that they have acted according to the sense of justice and fair play. In this sense, accountability is meant to prevent the misuse of authority by any public official or political decision makers.

Administrative accountability, on the other hand, refers to the duty or responsibility of each government official to explain his or her conduct to a senior official in order to prove that he or she has acted according to rules and the prescribed procedure as well as the principles of justice and fair play. To ensure accountability of various government officials, each one is made subject to monitoring and evaluation by a higher authority. The highest official of any department is responsible to the minister who is the political decision-maker.

Finally, moral accountability refers to the view that individual should exercise his free will to choose between good and evil because he is accountable for his actions. If he is impelled by a distorted system of values, such as treating other human beings as means to serve his self-interest, or compromising their dignity, he must be held morally responsible for a wrong judgement. If a government falters from right judgement, it is the moral obligation of the individual to raise his voice of protest against such decision and to stop the government from taking a

wrong course of action. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian activist and social philosopher, suggested the method of civil disobedience to deal with this situation. In any case, moral accountability of the wrong act will rest with the decision-maker himself.

Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience refers to an open and intentional act of breaking an unjust law and undergoing the prescribed punishment in order to draw public attention to the issue. It also includes the formal violation of prohibitory orders and courting arrest, etc. for a similar purpose.

The term 'civil disobedience' was originally coined by an American writer, Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) who published an essay in 1848 to explain why he had refused to pay taxes to the State for several years for which he had to undergo imprisonment. Thoreau argued that people must register their protest against any injustice perpetrated by their own government. Later this method of protest was widely popularized by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher and freedom fighter.

VIII
THE CURSE OF CORRUPTION

Corruption refers to an act involving immoral practices, such as drawing an undue advantage from one's dominant position, in public or private sphere. Prevention of corruption is an important responsibility of the state that aims at creating congenial conditions for the individual.

> Corruption is like a ball of snow; once it is set a rolling, it must increase.
>
> Charles Caleb Colton

It is said that corruption arises from authority plus monopoly minus transparency. Aristotle, ancient Greek philosopher, had observed that 'power and virtue cannot coexist'. He argued that when a ruler, whether it is one person, a small group or the many, has the opportunity to exercise absolute power, it is bound to become corrupt. Aristotle sought to rectify this situation through a 'mixed constitution' wherein a ruling aristocracy shall be made accountable to the ordinary people. Charles de Montesquieu, French political philosopher (*The Spirit of the Laws*; 1748) sought to evolve a system of government in which 'power shall check power'. Aristotle's argument was repeated by Lord Acton, British historian in 1887 in his oft-quoted statement: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

In public sphere, a person holding public responsibility may tend to use his authority for personal gain or gratification instead of public interest. It may involve manipulation of records, harassment of public with a view to forcing people to offer undue gratification (like bribe and other favours), setting aside the rules of

fair play and justice while exercising one's discretionary powers, etc.

> Just as it is difficult not to taste honey or poison placed on one's tongue, similarly it is difficult for one handling the ruler's money to refrain from tasting it at least in small quantities.
>
> Just as it is not possible to know when the fish moving in water drink water, similarly it is difficult to detect when officers employed in the execution of public works misappropriate money.
>
> Kautilya's *Arthashastra*

In private sphere like business and professions, corruption may include immoral practices like (*a*) Cheating the patrons and clients, shareholders or workers; (*b*) Cheating customers and consumers through adulteration, offering poor quality goods and services, hoarding and black-marketeering; and (c) Cheating the government through tax evasion, violation of environmental laws, encroachment of public land, etc. These practices may continue due to the nexus between powerful vested interests, widespread bureaucratic corruption, or public indifference.

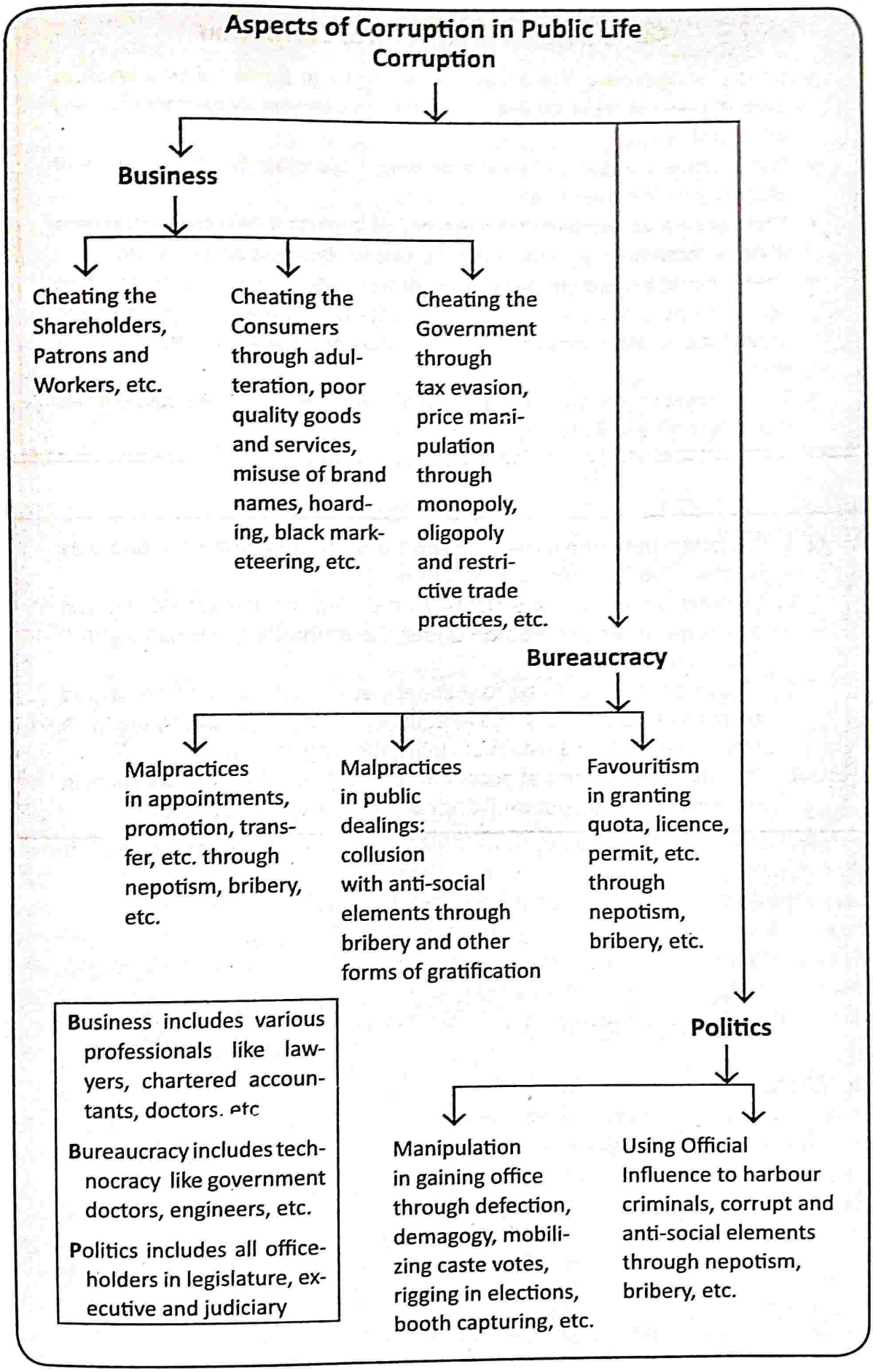
Similar practices may also be found in private trusts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies involving public dealing.

Corruption is regarded to be a manifestation of moral depravity and betrayal of trust. It can be prevented by creating moral awareness among power-holders, devising effective measures of checks and balances, introducing transparency in all public dealings (such as through e-governance and people's right to information), strictly enforcing law and norms of fair dealing, creating an atmosphere of work culture and honesty, and so on. Constant vigilance is required from all of us, apart from having official grievance-redressal machinery in each government department. In India, the existing institutions like the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Chief Vigilance Commissioner, *Lokayukt* and the proposed *Lokpal*, etc. should be strengthened, the practice of organizing *Lok Shivirs*, *Bijli Adalat*, Telephone *Adalat*, Pension *Adalat*, etc. should be suitably expanded, and genuine civil society activists should play a more active role in fighting against corruption instead of aiming at gaining political power.

Civil Society

Civil society Includes a wide range of voluntary associations of citizens which tend to motivate them to participate in civic causes and to solve common problems through collective self-help rather than reliance on state initiative. It serves as a medium of crystallizing and publicizing their opinions and Interests which would otherwise go unheard. It draws people into cooperative ventures, breaking down their social isolation and making them aware of their wider social responsibilities. Thus, it serves as the true source of democratization.

Various aspects of corruption prevailing in different spheres of public life may be shown by the following chart.


Aspects of Corruption in Public Life
Corruption
Business
Cheating the Shareholders, Patrons and Workers, etc.
Cheating the Consumers through adulteration, poor quality goods and services, misuse of brand names, hoarding, black marketeering, etc.
Cheating the Government through tax evasion, price manipulation through monopoly, oligopoly and restrictive trade practices, etc.
Bureaucracy
Malpractices in appointments, promotion, transfer, etc. through nepotism, bribery, etc.
Malpractices in public dealings: collusion with anti-social elements through bribery and other forms of gratification
Favouritism in granting quota, licence, permit, etc. through nepotism, bribery, etc.
Politics
Manipulation in gaining office through defection, demagogy, mobilizing caste votes, rigging in elections, booth capturing, etc.
Using Official Influence to harbour criminals, corrupt and anti-social elements through nepotism, bribery, etc.
Business includes various professionals like lawyers, chartered accountants, doctors, etc
Bureaucracy includes technocracy like government doctors, engineers, etc.
Politics includes all office-holders in legislature, executive and judiciary

Some Measures to Control Corruption

- Citizens should have free access to the media to express their grievances against any quarter–a business concern, government department, or any other authority.
- Public officials concerned should be held responsible for the redressal of citizens' genuine grievances.
- There should be complete transparency of important financial transactions done by individuals, government departments, business concerns, etc.
- There should be rigorous auditing of all accounts pertaining to government departments, business concerns, political parties, non-government organizations, etc. followed by public discussion of any irregularities found therein.
- There should be effective checks on the powers exercised by all public officials including police and other authorities.

Q 1. "Relation between individual and the state is essentially a two-way relationship." Elaborate and comment.

2. "Where an individual's rights as a citizen are exhausted, he can still hope to get protection under the umbrella of human rights." Elucidate.

3. "If our politics could be founded on ethics, all our conflicts would be resolved peacefully and effectively." Discuss this statement with reference to the concepts of rights and obligations.

4. "Failure on the front of accountability in public life is manifested in the spread of corruption." Critically examine this statement.

5

Concept of Democracy

I
MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

> Democracy is the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

> My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

The term 'democracy' was first used in the fifth century BC by the Greek historian Herodotus in the sense of 'rule by the people'. This term is derived from a combination of two Greek words : *demos*, meaning 'the people', and *kratien*, meaning 'to rule'. Abraham Lincoln's famous definition of democracy as 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' is very close to its literal meaning. In short, *democracy as a form of government implies that the ultimate authority of governance in this system is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interests of the people.*

Analysing Lincoln's definition, D.D. Raphael (*Problems of Political Philosophy*; 1976) observes that all government is government of the people; hence 'government *of* the people' does not convey much. As regards 'government *for* the people', Raphael argues that a benevolent despotism, as much as democracy, may be government *for (i.e.* in the interests of) the people, though the political experience of Europe, if not perhaps always of Asia, leads one to doubt whether a despotism can for long remain benevolent. So the essential idea of democratic government is 'government *by* the people'.

Benevolent Despotism

Benevolent despotism refers to a form of government where powers of governance are concentrated in the hands of a ruler who is not bound by law, constitution or any other superior authority, but who tends to rule for the benefit of the people at his own will.

Now the expression 'government *by* the people' also presents some difficulties. Literally this would mean direct democracy, *i.e.* a system where all public decisions are taken by the whole body of citizens. The form of government which existed in fourth-century BC Athens—an ancient Greek city-state—is cited as an example of direct democracy. But it was not a democracy in real sense of the term, as it was the government of a tiny section of the people, who were called 'freemen'; a large majority of the residents of the city-state were slaves or non-citizens; slaves and women had no political rights under that system. So it was by no means the 'government by the people'.

Direct Democracy

Direct democracy refers to a system of governance in which all public decisions are taken by the general body of citizens at their regular meetings. It is feasible only in very small communities, as in some ancient Greek city-states.

In modern democratic states we largely have universal political rights. But these states are so large that we cannot imagine to have direct democracy anywhere. So we have evolved the system of indirect or representative democracy. Now we have the 'government by the people through their representatives' who are chosen for a definite period (like two years to six years). Thus the people get an opportunity to test their representatives who may be re-elected or replaced at the next elections in view of their promise and performance.

Apparently 'government by the people' implies that public decisions should be taken with the approval of all the people. In practice, it would be a far cry. In the first place, all people cannot be made to think alike. So people's representatives have to be elected by a majority vote. Then public decisions by these representatives have also to be taken by a majority vote as they would be rarely unanimous. So the strength of people who approve of a particular decision is further diluted. However, it may be hoped that in spite of wide differences of opinion on minor issues, all public decisions in a democracy would be largely taken 'for the people', *i.e.* in the interests of all the people.

The principle of democracy requires that while all public decisions are taken with the approval of the majority, due regard would be given to the opinion of the minority. The majority must behave in a responsible manner. It should take care of the interests of the minority. It should also try to accommodate the viewpoint of minority on essential issues. Under normal conditions, where there is free flow of information and freedom to influence public opinion, those who are in minority today may be in majority tomorrow and *vice versa*. Hence, majority

and minority would give due regard to each other and live in a cordial atmosphere. However, *in a multicultural society* where people tend to vote for the candidates belonging to their own caste, region, religion, language or culture, etc. they may be divided into permanent majority and minorities. In such a case *the principle of democracy requires that different minorities (like racial, religious, linguistic or cultural minorities) enjoy full freedom to preserve their cultural traits; their viewpoint and their interests are adequately accommodated in all public decisions.*

Multicultural Society

Multicultural society refers to a society where people belonging to different cultural groups, that is those who identify themselves with a particular language, region, religion, race, custom, places of worship, dress code, eating habits, styles of living, art and craft, etc. live together as equal citizens of the same state. In a free society, these groups must enjoy full freedom to preserve the salient features of their respective cultures.

Democracy as government by the people relies heavily on wisdom of the people. As H.E. Fosdick has observed : "Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people." Is it proved by our experience? Sometimes ordinary people falter in their judgement. Sometimes they are swayed by emotions. They are often misled by demagogues. Sometimes it is suggested that democracy as the rule of mediocres should be replaced by a better system like meritocracy, *i.e.* government by those who have proved their competence. Shall we then get better results?

Demagogue

Demagogue refers to a type of political leader who tries to win support of the people by appealing to their emotions rather than by giving rational arguments.

It is interesting to note that the idea of meritocracy was introduced by Michael Young *(The Rise of the Meritocracy;* 1958). Meritocracy stood for a system of occupational hierarchy where each person will get his appropriate position according to his qualifications, competence and character, rather than on the basis of age, gender, race or inherited wealth. It was based on the belief that only a limited pool of talents exists among a nation's children and that such talents should not be allowed to go waste. However, the author of this idea himself was hardly optimistic about its consequences. He himself felt that such a system would denude the working class of its culture and its leadership. Critics of meritocracy argue that society will do better if there is equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity in an open competition. In other words, *democracy would be more conducive to social development than the proposed system of meritocracy.*

All the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy.

Alfred Emanuel Smith

II

CLASSICAL NOTION OF DEMOCRACY

FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES

Democracy has a long tradition. But the notions regarding its essence and grounds of its justification have been revised from time to time. Plato and Aristotle saw democracy at work in some of ancient Greek city-states, especially at Athens. Its salient features were : (*a*) Equal participation by all *freemen* in the common affairs of the *polis* (city-state) which was regarded as an essential instrument of good life; (*b*) Arriving at public decisions in an atmosphere of free discussion; and (*c*) General respect for law and for the established procedures of the community. The Greeks took pride in their customary law and admiringly distinguished it from the 'arbitrary rule' prevalent among the 'barbarians'.

However, the form of democracy prevalent in ancient Greek city-states was by no means regarded as an ideal rule. Plato decried democracy because the people were not properly equipped with education 'to select the best rulers and the wisest courses'. Democracy enabled the men with the gift of eloquence and oratory to get votes of the people and secure public office, but such men were thoroughly selfish and incompetent who ruined the state. Then, Aristotle identified democracy as 'the rule of the many', that is of the more numerous members of the community, particularly the poor ones. In his classification of governments into normal and perverted forms, Aristotle placed democracy among perverted forms since it signified the rule of the mediocres seeking their selfish interests, and not the interest of the state. Aristotle observed that no form of government prevalent during his times was stable and this led to frequent upheavals. In his search for a stable form of government, Aristotle, in his *Politics*, tried to analyse the merits and demerits of various forms of government. In the process, he made very interesting observations about the merits and demerits of democracy: "This rule by the poor has some advantages. The people, though individually they may be worse judges than those who have special knowledge, are collectively as good. Moreover, there are some artists whose works are best judged not by themselves alone but by those who do not possess the art; for example, the user or master of a house will be a better judge of it than the builder...and the guest will be a better judge of a feast than the cook." But the demerits of democracy, in this sense, were no less striking. According to Aristotle, again, *democracy is based on a false assumption of equality.* It arises out of the notion that those who are equal in one respect (such as in respect of the law) are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal. The upshot is that ability is sacrificed to numbers, while numbers are manipulated by trickery. Because the people are so easily misled, and so fickle in their views, the ballot should be limited to the intelligent. With this line of argument, Aristotle came to commend a *mixed constitution,* that is a combination of aristocracy and democracy, as the best possible form of government.

Indeed Aristotle's ideal of mixed constitution implied the need to restrain

unbridled powers of rulers to make them people-friendly. Later ancient philosophers like Polybius (203-121BC), Cicero (106-43 BC) and Saint Augustine (354-430) sought to carry forward the ideal of mixed constitution by subordinating the rulers to virtue or to the law which was exalted to be above the rule of men.

With the dawn of modern political thought, Machiavelli (1469-1527) (in his *Discourses;* 1531*)* and Montesquieu (1669-1755) (in his *The Spirit of the Laws;* 1748*)* took democracy to be a pure form of government that could be safely incorporated into statecraft only as one component of a mixed republican constitution. On the other hand, early exponents of the theory of social contract, *viz.* Hobbes (1588-1679) and Locke (1632-1704) sought to base political legitimacy on the consent of the people. This theory offered a challenge to traditional dictatorship and the divine right of kings. It recognized the state as an artificial and mechanistic creation of man which was meant to serve his own end. Placing the ultimate source of all governmental authority in individuals who entered into a 'contract' for the creation of the state for the protection of their natural liberty and natural rights, social contract theory laid the foundations for later democratic theory.

Then Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), another brilliant exponent of social contract theory, introduced the idea of 'popular sovereignty', and became the greatest early theorist of democracy. His theory of popular sovereignty is embedded in his concept of the general will. For Rousseau the state is not only a product of the general will, it continues to function under the direction of the general will.

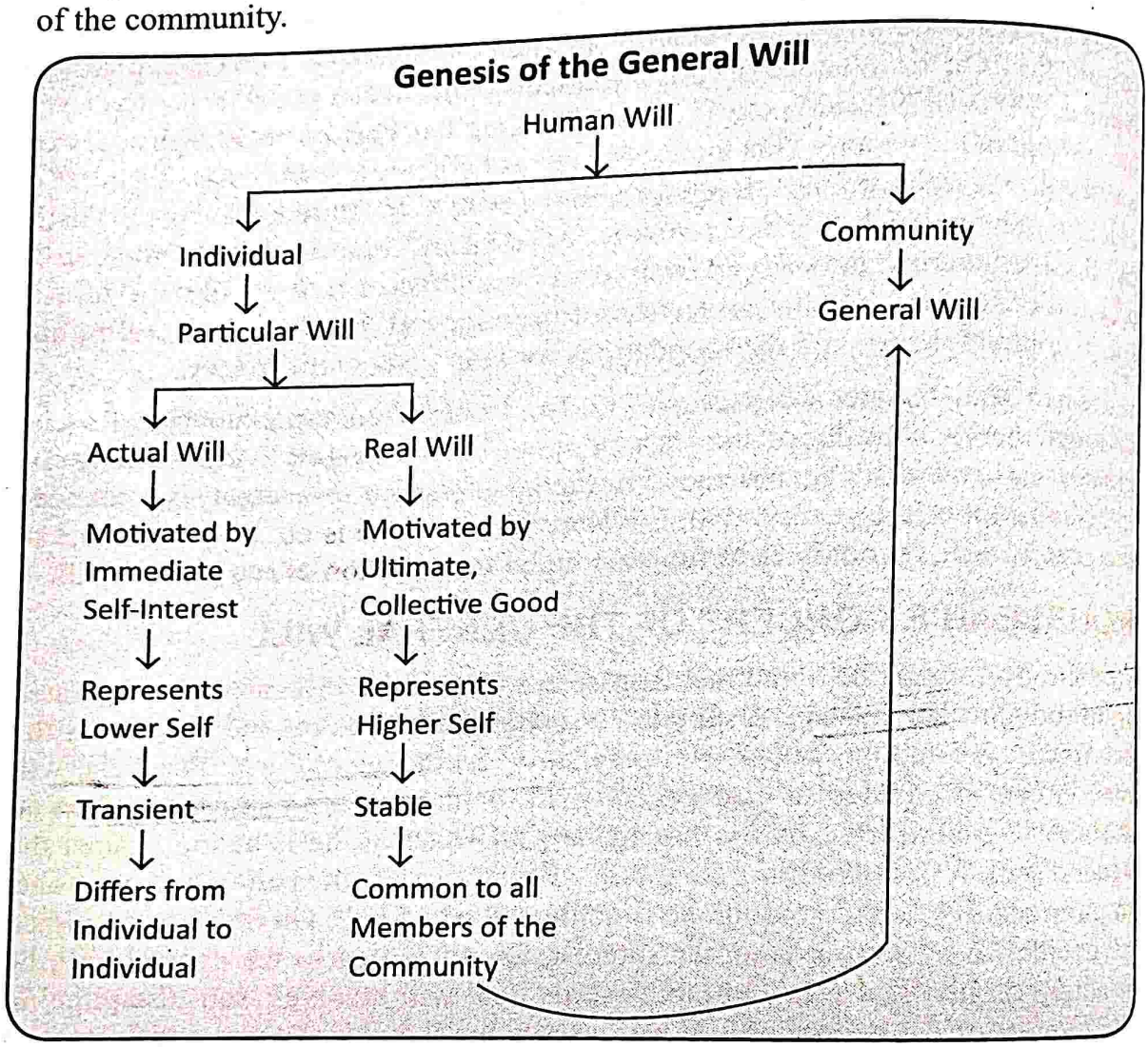
ROUSSEAU'S CONCEPT OF THE GENERAL WILL

At the outset it may be noted that Rousseau's idea of the will cannot be separated from thought. He makes a distinction between the will of the individual, *i.e.* the *particular will* and the will of the community, *i.e.* the *general will.* Particular will may either be inclined toward general will, or it may turn against it. When an individual is motivated by his momentary self-interest, he is acting against the general will. It is called his 'actual will'. For example, when an individual wants to jump red light on a crossing, he is acting on actual will. On the contrary, when he decides to act in the common interest, *i.e.* according to the general will, he is acting on his 'real will'. In other words, real will involves 'self-discipline' in the interest of the community. It also serves the individual's real and long-term interest which cannot be separated from the common interest. Actual will reflects an individual's *lower self;* real will reflects his *higher self.*

When different individuals act on their actual will, their interests would clash with each other because everybody would be acting on his momentary self-interest. It may be followed by disastrous consequences. For instance, when people want to jump red light on a crossing, it may result in accident. But when they act on their real will, there is little possibility of their clash. When all are self-disciplined, there will be a smooth flow of traffic. It will ensure safety of one and all. When an individual is acting on actual will, he is not only acting against the interest of the community, but also acting against his own real interest, or against his true 'freedom'. When he is prevented from acting in that way, he may feel constrained, but he is not being deprived of his 'freedom' in the real sense of the term. That is

why Rousseau quips: "A man can be forced to be free."

When people act on their actual will, they are bound to have differences. But when they act on their real will, their differences would disappear. They would start thinking alike. As the proverb goes: "All wise men think alike." General will is, therefore, harmonious. It reflects the real will of all members of the community. It may be described as the 'point of convergence' of the real will of all members of the community.



CONCEPT OF POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

Rousseau's concept of *popular sovereignty* stands for the supreme authority of the general will in society. Since general will is reflected in the 'higher self' of each member of the community, it is morally superior to any other expression of will. Sovereignty of the general will would ensure the rule of right reason in society which would be constantly devoted to the common good. General will is elevated to the position of an absolute, unlimited and inalienable sovereignty because it reflects the common will of all right-thinking people.

The concept of popular sovereignty does not rely on any principle of higher law, *e.g.* natural law, divine law or divine revelation, but regards the

organized power of the people as the source of all reason to determine what is right or wrong. It therefore embodies the appropriate expression of the principle of classical democracy. However, it is suitable only for a small and uniform community, preferably for 'direct democracy' as Rousseau himself conceded. In the contemporary large and complex societies where 'representative democracy' is inevitable, it can only be accepted for its symbolic significance.

Natural Law

Natural Law refers to a set of rules of good conduct which exist independently of conventional law. These are directly derived from nature which can be discovered through moral intuition and by the application of human faculty of reasoning. Champions of natural law regard it as superior to any other law.

Indeed, Rousseau commended popular sovereignty for two reasons : (*a*) Sovereignty should be founded on the will of the people; and (*b*) Sovereignty should be exercised for the public good or the common good. The first reason considers sovereignty as a right; the second considers it as a duty. The principle of democracy calls for their synthesis. But unfortunately, some thinkers have confused the two. They tried to treat both these reasons as the foundation of supreme power of the sovereign. Thus they have opened the floodgates of absolutism and authoritarianism. When sovereign is not bound by his duty, he is no longer capable of upholding democracy.

Absolutism

Absolutism refers to a form of rule in which all powers of governance are held by a single entity. Powers of the ruler are not restricted by any external limitations, such as those based on custom, precedent, natural law, divine law, common law, judicial interpretations of law, public demand or the force of public opinion.

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism refers to a political outlook or attitude that requires everybody or everything to conform to an established order enshrined in customary practices or a set of beliefs. It subordinates all concerned to a person or a group which is regarded as the guardian of that order.

In practical politics, distinction must be drawn between the 'state' and 'government'. The principle of popular sovereignty may be invoked to concede sovereignty of the state which is an abstract entity. But government is comprised of human beings who are fallible in spite of their best education and training. When sovereignty is attributed to government, even if it is elected by the people, the possibility of its misuse cannot be ruled out. As Aristotle had warned: 'power and virtue cannot coexist.' Democracy can function only with a 'constitutional government' which implies the existence of effective checks on the power-holders.

Constitutional Government

Constitutional government refers to a form of government in which powers of governance (legislative, executive and judicial powers) are exercised by those who are appointed through the prescribed procedure, in a prescribed manner and under regular legal and political restraints as provided by a constitution. A constitution in this context denotes a set of rules, procedures, practices and conventions which prescribe structures, functions, powers and responsibilities of different organs of government; the procedure of their formation, working and dissolution; relation between the state and its citizens, etc.

Constitutional government is characterized by the supremacy of law which implies that both public authorities and citizens are equally subject to law and the constitution; all citizens are entitled to equal protection of the laws and they have free access to political and judicial channels for communicating their demands and the redressal of their grievances. In short, a constitutional government stands for a limited, responsive and responsible government. Its principal objective is to secure liberty and justice for the people.

Again, Rousseau has not drawn a clear distinction between 'will' and 'reason'. Reason is mainly concerned with the questions of 'right' and 'wrong'. Will is supposed to be neutral. Reason deals with complex questions which are subject to prolonged debate; will is a simple matter which can be ascertained empirically. Supremacy of the will is the crux of liberal theory. The questions of 'superior will' and 'inferior will' drag us into the field of reason. The idea of 'superior will' pertains to the realm of idealist theory which is often invoked in support of absolutism. In short, Rousseau's philosophy must be taken with a note of caution.

Idealist Theory

Idealist theory refers to the theory of state chiefly advanced by G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) which eulogizes the state as embodiment of Reason and holds that individual's freedom lies in accepting the dictates of the ideal state. This theory proves disastrous when an existing government is allowed to exercise authority of the ideal state without questioning the character of the persons who form that particular government.

CONTEMPORARY SCENARIO

Since the eighteenth century, democracy came to be regarded as a moral standard by which regimes were judged rather than merely as one of the forms of government. During this period, democratic theory and practice focused on the extension of franchise with a view to translating the principle of human equality into practice. However in actual practice, democracy was first established in the Western world during the nineteenth century. Initially this term stood for 'representative government' where election of representatives was held by a competitive vote. However, only male citizens had the right to vote in elections. In this sense democracy came to be established in the United States in 1820s and 1830s when a number of States expanded the franchise.

In France, adult male suffrage was abruptly introduced in 1848, but they could not set up a parliamentary government on an enduring basis till 1871. In Britain parliamentary government had been established on an enduring basis since 1688 but the bulk of male citizens were not granted franchise till 1867. It is worth-noting that in all these systems only male franchise was sought to be introduced. Hence early democratic systems of modern Western world were at best imperfect expressions of the idea of democracy as they were not based on universal adult franchise. Female franchise was introduced in the United States since 1919; in Britain since 1928; in France since 1945; and in Switzerland all women got their right to vote as late as 1971. Thus even in the Western world the full idea of democracy was materialized only in the twentieth century.

Universal Adult Franchise

Under a democratic system, universal adult franchise refers to the provision that each citizen of the state is entitled to vote at the election on attaining the prescribed age (such as 18 years or 21 years), without any discrimination on grounds of gender, race, caste, creed, region, language, culture, etc.

III
MECHANISM OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Democracy is an old concept; liberalism is a recent one. Today, liberalism is generally thought to be inseparable from democracy so much so that the term 'democracy' is applied to denote 'liberal democracy' unless otherwise specified. Liberalism is a principle of politics which regards 'liberty' of the individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. Liberty, in this sense, implies 'liberation' from restraints, particularly from the restraints imposed by an authoritarian state. This principle was evolved in the West in late seventeenth century in order to liquidate feudal privileges of the land-owing class and to create favourable conditions for the new entrepreneurial class to enable them to contribute to social progress.

Authoritarian State

Authoritarian state refers to a state where an individual, a group, an institution, or a set of rules enshrined in a sacred book (and not in a duly adopted Constitution) are regarded as the source of authority, *i.e.* the legitimate power; its orders or directions are required to be obeyed by all without questioning.

In the history of political thought, John Locke (1632-1704), English political philosopher, is regarded the father of liberalism. However, early liberalism sought to win political rights for the new entrepreneurial class which paved the way for the rise of capitalism. In due course large sections of working classes were concentrated in industrial towns. They became conscious of their strength as well as of their goal to win better living conditions. They fought for their political rights

and their success manifested itself in the success of democracy, based on universal adult franchise. This is described as 'liberal democracy' because it seeks to extend the benefit of liberty to all citizens without discrimination.

Today liberal democracy is distinguished from other forms of political system on the basis of its procedure and institutional arrangements. The presence or absence of these characteristics will determine whether a system is democratic or not. Champions of democracy firmly believe that a government can be conducted according to will of the people only by adherence to these institutions and procedures. Any other system may have many qualities but it will not qualify as a democracy without these characteristics. The mechanism of liberal democracy is largely identified by the following characteristics:

MORE THAN ONE POLITICAL PARTIES FREELY COMPETING FOR POLITICAL POWER

Liberal democracy seeks reconciliation between diverse interests and ideologies of various groups. There is no fixed method of securing this reconciliation. When there is a free competition between more than one political parties for power, the people get an opportunity to consider various alternative policies, programmes and personalities to exercise their choice. According to this test, single-party systems do not qualify as democracies. The former Soviet Union and the present People's Republic of China cannot be treated as democracies as they conceded monopoly of power to their respective Communist Parties, in spite of a façade of periodic elections. Liberal democracy requires open competition for power between different political parties on the basis of established and accepted form of procedure.

> Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.
>
> H.L. Mencken

POLITICAL OFFICES NOT CONFINED TO ANY PRIVILEGED CLASS

In a liberal democracy a political office or public office can be acquired only through the support of the people, not by birth, tradition or anybody's favour. This feature of democracy distinguishes it from theocracy, feudalism, monarchy and despotism, etc. In a democracy all citizens enjoy equal rights and status. Any citizen can have access to political office by following the prescribed procedure and fulfilling certain conditions. Political office can be held only for a limited period which must be relinquished on completion of one's term or other exigency, such as the dissolution of the legislature, one's own resignation, etc. Some qualification, such as age, education, etc. may be prescribed for the candidates of a political office, but nobody can be declared unfit for any office on grounds of gender, caste, creed, language, region, etc. However, in order to secure due representation for all strata of the population, some seats in the decision-making bodies can be reserved for minorities or weaker sections. It is believed that such provision would strengthen democracy rather than weaken it.

Theocracy

Theocracy refers to a form of government in which all important political and administrative offices are held by the religious hierarchy. Literally theocracy means the 'rule by God', that is a regime which is run according to the will and commandments of God. Since in the real world, religious organization and authority claim to interpret the commands of God, theocracy is marked by the subordination of political authority to religious authority. In medieval Europe, the principle of theocracy was invoked to establish supremacy of church over the state.

Feudalism

Feudalism refers to the system of economic, political and social organization which flourished in the medieval Europe. Economically it was based on agriculture where social status of different sections of society was determined by the land tenure. Land was held by various levels of landlords in return for homage and military service to be rendered to the King. It was tilled by serfs who were obliged to render labour services and dues to the landlords. All sections of society including clerics, soldiers, administrators and toilers were tied to each other by mutual obligations. With the advent of Industrial Revolution in the mid of the eighteenth century, it became necessary to break this system to ensure freedom of the new entrepreneurial class as well as the new working class.

Monarchy

Monarchy refers to a system of governance in which a King, Queen or any other royal personage reigns over a country who is technically regarded the supreme legal authority in that country. The people are treated as his 'subjects' unless the whole system is governed by a Constitution. On his or her death or retirement, the authority will pass to another member of his or her family, according to the prevalent custom or law.

Despotism

Despotism refers to a form of rule in which the ruler is not accountable to anybody, nor he is required to seek anybody's advice or guidance in taking decisions about dealing with his subjects. Ordinarily despotism is identified as a cruel and unfair form of rule although it may be imagined that a despotic ruler may be concerned with the welfare of the people, as exemplified by the notion of benevolent despotism.

PERIODIC ELECTIONS BASED ON UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE

Since representative government is the only practicable method of establishing democracy in the present-day world, periodic elections become necessary for this

purpose. Each citizen should have the right to vote on attaining the prescribed age (say, 18 years); nobody should be disqualified on grounds of gender, caste, creed, language, region, etc. Voting should be secret so that each citizen can exercise his or her right in this respect without fear or favour. It is true that the principle of universal adult franchise was introduced in modern democracies only gradually, but today it is regarded a necessary condition of democracy.

Periodic elections require that the people's representatives should be chosen for a limited period (say four or five years) so that the party that comes to power is able to implement its policy and programme, but it is obliged to seek renewal of confidence of the people to continue in office. At the same time, the opposition should have an opportunity to bring any shortcomings of the ruling party to the notice of the people, to offer alternative policy and programme with a view to winning the next election.

PROTECTION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

Protection of civil liberties, such as freedom of thought and expression, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly and association, and personal freedom, *i.e.* freedom from arbitrary arrest, right to fair trial, equality before the law, etc. are the essential characteristics of liberal democracy. On the one hand, these freedoms enable the citizens to form interest groups and other organizations to influence government decisions; on the other hand, they ensure independence of the mass media, particularly the press, from government control. Without civil liberties, will of the people cannot be translated into public policy and decision. Civil liberties, therefore, constitute the core of democracy.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

Freedom of the people cannot be secured in the face of concentration of governmental powers in any one organ. Liberal democracy, therefore, insists on the separation of powers between different organs of government. While the executive and the legislature might become interdependent in a parliamentary government, the judiciary must be kept independent of both. While the legislature and the executive in a democracy are dominated by politicians, judges are appointed on merit and they cannot be removed from office in consequence of sudden changes in the political climate of the country. Independence of judiciary enables the judges to pronounce their verdict without fear or favour. This strengthens the faith of the people in the regime and ensures continuity and stability of the judicial process.

CONCLUSION

The above conditions must be fulfilled in a liberal democracy under the normal circumstances. However, some flexibility in these conditions may be conceded under special circumstances, such as emergency. In any case, the mere fulfilment of these conditions should not lead us to complacency. In a developing nation like India, an apparent democratic structure may suffer from several inner distortions. For instance, the existence of more than one political parties competing for political power may simply involve conflict and competition between certain dominant and

vocal interests, such as large manufacturers, big businessmen, rich peasants and landlords, for acquiring a hold on political power rather than for serving the public interest more effectively. Similarly, vested interests may try to foster a feudal political culture among the people so as to reduce them to submissive voters rather than vehicles of social change. Again, there may be no formal restriction on entry to positions of political power, but in actual practice, these positions may remain the sole preserve of a tiny class. Then there may be complete freedom of the press, but the press might be owned exclusively by big business houses who may use it for moulding public opinion so as to serve their vested interests. Also, the freedom of expression might become redundant because of vast illiteracy, mass ignorance, widespread superstitions, abject poverty and general apathy of the people. It is also possible that the judiciary is independent of both the executive and the legislature, but some judges might uphold the values of a bourgeois society and thus dispense a distorted form of justice.

In a nutshell, the mere structure of a liberal democracy is no guarantee of achieving the objectives of democracy. In any case, the prolonged practice of following democratic procedure may create greater political awareness among the people and a general transformation of the attitudes of power-holders.

> Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.
>
> Reinhold Niebuhr

IV
CONTEMPORARY THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

Traditional theories of democracy were chiefly concerned with democracy as a form of government and they focused on ethical justification of democracy. Contemporary theories of democracy largely seek to reformulate the notion of democracy in the light of recent sociological findings.

ELITIST THEORY

Elitist theories were originally developed in the field of sociology to explain the behaviour of men in a social setting. Their implications in the field of politics posed a challenge to democratic theory, which was in turn revised by several thinkers. Broadly speaking, the elitist theories hold that every society consists of two categories of men: (*a*) *Elite* or the minority within a social collectivity (such as a society, a state, a religious institutions, or a political party) which exercises a preponderant influence within that collectivity; and (*b*) Masses or the majority which is governed by the *elite*.

Vilfredo Pareto *(The Mind and Society;* 1915-19) was the first to use the term '*elite*' and 'masses' to indicate superior and inferior groups in society, although the idea of such division of society was given earlier by Gaetano Mosca *(The*

Ruling Class ; 1896) and Robert Michels (*Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* ; 1911). Mosca postulated that the people are necessarily divided into two groups: the rulers and the ruled. The ruling class controls most of the wealth, power and prestige in society and exercises all power, whatever form of government might be adopted. The ruled are not competent to replace it.

Michels propounded his famous 'iron law of oligarchy' which implied that every organization—whatever its original aims—is eventually reduced to an 'oligarchy', that is the rule of the chosen few. Majority of human beings are apathetic, indolent and slavish and they are permanently incapable of self-government. Pareto came to the conclusion that the '*elite*' show highest ability in their field of activity whatever its nature might be, while masses lack qualities of leadership and they fear from responsibility. They feel safe in following the direction of the *elite*.

Thus the elitist theory had empirically demonstrated that democracy as government of the people is incapable of realization. Champions of democracy found it difficult to repudiate the arguments advanced by the elitist theories. They, therefore, sought to accommodate the elitist theory in the framework of democratic theory which led to its revision. The elitist democratic theory or 'democratic elitism' was developed by several writers. Of these, Schumpeter (1883-1950) is particularly significant.

Joseph A. Schumpeter, in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942), pointed out that the forms of government should be distinguished by their institutions, and especially by their methods of appointing and dismissing the supreme makers of law and policy. Accordingly, the 'democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's votes'. This implies that: (*a*) In a democracy, political decisions are taken by the 'leadership', and not by the people themselves; and (*b*) There is a free competition among the leaders for winning people's votes. In other words, democracy is not a government by the people, nor is it a means to give effect to the will of the people; rulers comprise a different set of individuals than the common people. The role of the people is reduced to choosing their rulers from the competing *elites*. The redeeming feature of democracy is that, unlike other forms of government, it does not allow political leadership to wield absolute power. It must draw up policies with an eye on gaining a larger support of the electorate than its opponents can obtain. In any case, the initiative remains in the hands of the leadership while the people simply respond to it according to their choice. The leaders trade in votes and the better combination of policies will fetch more votes by appealing to wider sections of the political market.

PLURALIST THEORY

Pluralist theories of democracy fall into two categories : (*a*) The elitist-democratic theories which regard the *plurality of elites* as the foundation of modern liberal democracy, such as those advocated by Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) and Raymond Aron (1905-83); and (*b*) The group theories which interpret democracy as a process

of bargaining among relatively autonomous groups; the existence and functioning of these groups in a democracy lends a pluralistic character to the polity. These theories comprise the mainstream pluralist theory of democracy.

In the United States, A.F. Bentley *(The Process of Government ;* 1908) and David Truman *(The Governmental Process ;* 1951) interpreted democracy as a political game played by a great variety of groups. According to this interpretation, government is the focal point for public pressure and its task is to make policies which reflect the highest common group demand. Thus, democratic society is seen as a pluralist, differentiated society where the management of public affairs is shared by a number of groups having different values, sources and methods of influence.

Robert Dahl, in his *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956), developed a model of the democratic process which he described as *polyarchy.* This corresponds to the models developed by Bentlely, Truman and E. Latham (*The Group Basis of Politics;* 1952), variously known as *pluralism* or the *group theory.* The term *pluralism* is used here in the sociological sense, that is to describe the *pluralistic* nature of democratic society, not in the philosophical sense as a political ideal, associated with the pluralist theory of sovereignty. Pluralist theory of democracy uses the *pluralism* for a scientific explanation of the political process.

The gist of pluralist democracy may be given as follows: The policy-making process, however centralized it may appear in form, is, in reality, a highly decentralized process of bargaining among relatively autonomous groups. In other words, public policy is not a product of the will of the *elite* or the chosen few, as the elitist theories of democracy hold. On the contrary, it is an outcome of the interaction of all groups who make claims upon or express interest in that particular issue. The extent to which different groups will get their way, is a function of the strength of the groups and the intensity of their participation.

In fact, the pluralist theory calls for a revision of the democratic theory itself as well as of the elitist theory of democracy. In its view, policy-making is actually done neither by the representatives of a coherent majority, nor by an autonomous and unresponsive *elite*, but is a product of the interaction among various groups. This theory goes to the extent of claiming that since public policy is largely an outcome of the bargaining among the groups interested in a given policy issue, the form of government becomes almost insignificant. In other words, whether you adopt the democratic form of government or any other form, the result is not likely to vary significantly. In any case, public policy will reflect the interests of the more organized and vocal groups in society. For instance, the interests of producers are likely to dominate those of consumers because the former are usually more organized, vocal and influential than the latter..

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

The elitist and pluralist theories of democracy have added an empirical dimension to democratic theory by incorporating the results of sociological theory and research. In a nutshell : (*a*) The elitist theories concede that policy-making in a democracy is the function of the *elite* while people's role is confined to approval

and rejection of particular policies made or advocated by the competing *elites*; and (*b*) The pluralist theories view policy-making in a democracy as a decentralized process characterized by bargaining between competing autonomous groups. *The pluralist theories are more optimistic than elitist theories because they repudiate the authoritarian basis of policy-making in a democracy as suggested by the elitist theories.* In any case, *both theories arrive at conclusions which are far removed from the essence of democratic theory.*

Men no doubt differ in their physical and intellectual capacities and other natural gifts. But social inequalities in the present-day society do not always correspond to natural inequalities. In most cases the phenomenon of domination and dependence in society is closely related to economic disparities. The elitist-pluralist theory of democracy tries to justify the phenomenon of domination and dependence on grounds of certain outstanding inborn qualities of persons, or on grounds of better organization of certain interests. In effect, it tends to maintain the *status quo*. However, if the economic structure of the society is transformed so that rewards are directly related to the quality and amount of work done, instead of the privileged position and manipulative power of certain persons, the existing conditions of domination and dependence will disappear and the principle of equality based on reason will reign supreme—which is the essence of democracy.

V
THEORY OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Concept of democracy implies that ultimate authority of governance should rest with the people themselves. When this idea is sought to be implemented through the mechanism of representative democracy, it is possible that the people may become inactive after choosing their representatives till the next general elections. Moreover, when the size of a democratic community expands geographically and it includes a large population with a variety of composition in terms of race, religion, language and culture, the distance between the people and their representatives is likely to widen. For example, in large democracies like India and the United States, a very small section of citizens participates in any discussion; and very few citizens enter into contact with their representatives. Doesn't this state of affairs point to the erosion of democracy?

Elitist theory of democracy implies that citizen participation is not a necessary condition of democracy. Thus for Schumpeter, running of government and framing of public policies is the task of professional politicians; the role of ordinary citizens is confined to voting for the politicians, the political parties and the programmes of their choice at the time of periodic elections. In his view, modern democracy is primarily the rule of politicians in which ordinary citizens play a very limited role, at regular intervals. Robert Dahl's pluralist theory of democracy also reconciles with a low level of citizen participation. C.B. Macpherson *(Democratic Theory — Essays in Retrieval;* 1973) has observed that Schumpeter-Dahl axis treats

democracy as a mechanism designed to maintain an equilibrium. It conceives of democracy as a competition between two or more *elite* groups for the power to govern the whole society, requiring only a low level of citizen participation. In Macpherson's view, it is a distorted view where democracy is reduced from a humanist aspiration to a market equilibrium system.

Concept of participatory democracy repudiates this model of democracy as it regards people's political participation as the basic principle of democracy. In short, *political participation denotes the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental process effecting their lives.* In other words, when citizens themselves play an active role in the process of formulation and implementation of public policies and decisions, their activity is called political participation. Conventional mode of political participation includes voting, contesting for office, campaigning for a political party or contributing to the management of a community project like public safety, cleanliness drive, or the maintenance of a public park, etc. Interestingly, an act of opposition or public protest also involves political participation. For example, signing a petition, attending a peaceful demonstration, joining a protest march or forming a human chain, etc. come within the purview of political participation. Indeed the various acts of public protest in a non-democratic set-up like passive resistance, civil disobedience and *satyagraha,* also qualify as political participation. They are the manifestation of a strong awareness of public interest.

The present-day champions of participatory democracy argue that representative democracy gives little opportunity to its citizens for any significant participation in the decision-making process. Consequently, under the prevailing system electorates have so little knowledge and understanding of political problems; voters are so indifferent to voting; political representatives are so averse to public accountability; and corruption and abuse of power are so rampant in the whole administration! If people get better opportunities of political participation, they will be inclined to discuss public issues elaborately, keep a strict watch on the activities of politicians, and they shall be able to prevent the corruption and abuse of power. Hence citizen participation is not only a necessary condition of good society, it is an essential feature of good society itself.

In modern large-size states, the objectives of participatory democracy are sought to be achieved through; (*a*) Decentralization of administration in which many decisions are left to local communities, as in the case of expansion of *panchayati raj* in India; and (*b*) Extensive use of referendum, as in Switzerland. Under this procedure, people's vote is sought on any new law, constitution or constitutional amendment. In Australia, referendum is compulsory on any constitutional amendment. It is a method of combining some features of direct democracy with representative democracy.

In contemporary political theory, *citizen participation* is sought to be *justified* mainly *on three grounds :* (*a*) *Instrumental view* asserts that citizen participation is aimed at promoting or defending the interests of the participant. Before entering in participation, persons calculate the anticipated benefits and costs, and the prospects of attaining their objectives; (*b*) *Developmental* or *educational view*

of participation holds that it enhances the participants' general moral, social and political awareness; and finally, (*c*) *Communitarian view* of participation justifies it on the ground that it contributes to the common good.

In *socialist countries,* the concept of participatory democracy came as *a response to the elitist theory.* Elitist theory had claimed that the division of society into leaders and followers was universal and inevitable. It had therefore ruled out the prospects of a 'classless society'. In a way socialist circles had accepted this position by recognizing the superiority of 'vanguard of the proletariat'. In contrast, participatory democracy sought to bridge the gap between leaders and followers by encouraging mass participation in the socialist programme and making leaders responsive to the sentiments of ordinary people. The description of socialist countries as 'people's republic', 'people's democratic republic', etc. was symbolic of this approach. In China, for instance, Mao Zedong (1893-1976) encouraged mass campaigns and followed the policy of 'mass line' which required the leaders and party workers to come close to the masses, explore their sentiments and mould their leadership patterns on those lines.

Vanguard of the Proletariat

This expression was used by V.I. Lenin (1870-1924), an exponent of Marxism, to designate the more enlightened, energetic and committed section of the working class which formed the Communist Party. This section was to provide leadership to the working class in its struggle against capitalism, and also to run government during the socialist phase.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Champions of participatory democracy insist only on increasing citizens' participation within the existing democratic system. They do not suggest any alternative system for its implementation. Indeed necessary means of participatory democracy already exist within the organization and procedure of liberal democracy. Promotion of participation needs concrete action, not a theory.

Then the advocates of participatory democracy seem to be too optimistic. People's participation in a democracy can reasonably be increased to a small extent. Beyond that it *may* prove harmful. Beneficial results of public decisions, policies and programmes come very late. This process may require imposition of burden on some sections in the public interest. Ordinary people are not endowed with adequate patience and insight that would enable them to make a correct assessment of the situation. If they are encouraged for too much participation, they may take their grievances and disputes to streets, and disrupt normal life.

When ordinary people are reduced to a crowd, it becomes extremely difficult to keep them in discipline or control. When people are moved by excitement, they can hardly be persuaded to stop. As a result, we are faced with frequent gatherings and processions, slogan-shouting, rallies, huge demonstrations, strikes, picketing and *gheraos,* threats to stop water and electric supply and public transport, and incidents of damage to public property. Under the circumstances, it seems that

those who have the skill to gather and mobilize crowds will be able to secure fulfilment of their unreasonable demands whereas those who try to present their case peacefully and modestly will go unheard.

VI
CONCEPT OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

Liberal democracy is largely identified by its procedure and institutions. The concept of people's democracy is associated with Marxist thought which evaluates any political system with reference to its class character. Marxists criticize the prevalent form of liberal democracy because it harbours the capitalist system in which the majority of people comprising workers is deprived of power.

Class Character

According to Marxist theory, since the dawn of civilization, society has remained divided into two antagonistic classes : *haves* (the owners of means of social production) and *have-nots* (those who are compelled to live by their labour power). In all ages till the age of capitalism, *haves* are the dominant class, and *have-nots* are the dependent class. In the age of socialism, *have-nots* (*i.e.* the working class) become the dominant class, place all major means of production under social ownership, and use their power to liquidate the remnants of capitalism. Class character of a political system indicates as to which class is in power in a given system.

MARXIST CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Marxists argued that liberal democracy, by fostering the capitalist economic system, exclusively serves the interests of the bourgeoisie, *i.e.* the capitalist class. They, therefore, dubbed liberal democracy the *'bourgeois democracy'*. In their view, in spite of its vast paraphernalia of representative institutions, liberal democracy hardly serves the interests of the people on whose behalf power is exercised. According to Marx and Engels, "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" *(Communist Manifesto;* 1848). Here the term 'modern state' refers to the prevalent model of liberal democracy.

> The oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them.
>
> Karl Marx

In fact, Marx did not reject democracy as such. He attacked 'bourgeois democracy' as a distorted form of democracy, and tried to give an alternative version of true democracy. He was inspired by Rousseau's critique of representative democracy and saw true democracy as an expression of homogeneous interests. But his adherence to class perspective convinced him that a class-divided society

cannot have homogeneous interests. Accordingly, the idea of true democracy could only be realized in a classless society, or at best, in a socialist state which represented the uniform interest of the working class.

GENESIS OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

Marx had anticipated that after the socialist revolution, bourgeois democracy would be replaced by a 'commune system'. Commune refers to an association whose members own everything in common, including the products of their labour. In the present context, communes were envisaged to be small communities who would manage their own affairs, and would elect their delegates for the larger administrative units like districts and towns. These larger units would in turn elect their delegates for the still larger administrative areas, culminating in national administration. This system is described as 'pyramidal structure of direct democracy'. Under this arrangement, all delegates would be bound by the instructions of their electorates, and would take their respective place within the pyramidal structure of directly elected committees. In case of violation of instructions of their electors, they could be removed from office. It may be recalled that this scheme was sought to be implemented in the former Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution (1917), and in China after the Chinese Revolution (1949), but it failed in both countries, primarily due to abolition of incentives for better work.

Socialist systems on the lines of the Soviet Union were also established in several countries of East Europe after the Second World War (1939-45), under the direct supervision of the Soviet Union. Originally these included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania. Some other countries of the world (apart from China) also adopted socialist system on their own. These included Cuba, North Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Yemen and Yugoslavia. All of them were ruled by the communist parties of their respective countries, or they formed coalitions with some like-minded minor parties as a temporary measure. Broadly speaking, all socialist systems looked after the homogeneous interests of the working classes. They were described as 'people's democracies' in order to distinguish them from Western-type liberal democracies. With the collapse of socialist systems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (1989-91) and relinquishing of this system by some other countries, people's democracies are now only left in China (People's Republic of China), Vietnam (Socialist Republic of Vietnam), North Korea (People's Democratic Republic of Korea) and Cuba (Republic of Cuba).

It may be pointed out that the term 'democracy' itself stands for government by the people. Hence the usage of 'people's democracy' seems to be tautological. This term was adopted to indicate a new type of democracy. Conventional use of democracy stands for liberal democracy which is based on a specific procedure of government-formation. Hence it may be identified as 'procedural democracy'. On the other hand, 'people's democracy' focuses on the substance of democracy, *i.e.* safeguarding the interests of the ordinary people. Hence, it claims to be identified as 'substantive democracy'. In its view, interest of the working classes is coterminous with the interest of the people.

VII
DISTINCTION BETWEEN PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE DEMOCRACY

Ordinarily the institutions of liberal democracy are recognized as constituting the mainstream democracy. Accordingly, democracy is regarded as a procedure designed to obtain consent of the people for arriving at public decisions. It is hoped that when this procedure is adopted, public decisions would be automatically devoted to people's welfare. Champions of liberal democracy regard it the standard by which they would judge any political system. They would never compromise this procedure for any other gain. This model of democracy is therefore called 'procedural democracy'.

Defence of procedural democracy implies that 'government *by* the people' would necessarily prove to be 'government *for* the people'. However, some exponents of democracy do not accept this position. They argue that the goal of democracy, *viz.* people's welfare should take precedence over its procedure. In other words, the structure of liberal democracy does not necessarily ensure that it would be conducive to people's welfare. So some critics of liberal democracy advocate necessary adjustment in the procedure and institutions of democracy for the achievement of its substantive goal. Their approach to democracy may be described as 'substantive democracy'. In a nutshell, advocates of substantive democracy insist that the working of a genuine democratic system should result in the amelioration of the condition of ordinary people, particularly the poor, deprived and underprivileged sections of society, as they constitute the majority.

The debate between the champions of 'procedural democracy' and 'substantive democracy' regarding the true nature of democracy shows that *democracy is essentially a contested concept.* Thus Marxists argue that the goals achieved by a state are determined by the class character of the state. They have tried to show that when liberal democracy is adopted in the political sphere, it tends to sustain capitalism in the economic sphere which promotes the interests of the capitalist class and involves exploitation of the working class. So it cannot be regarded as true democracy. Marxists hold that true democracy should promote the interests of the working class which constitutes majority. That is possible only under socialism. Hence socialism is synonymous with true democracy.

Capitalism

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production, where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as market demand.

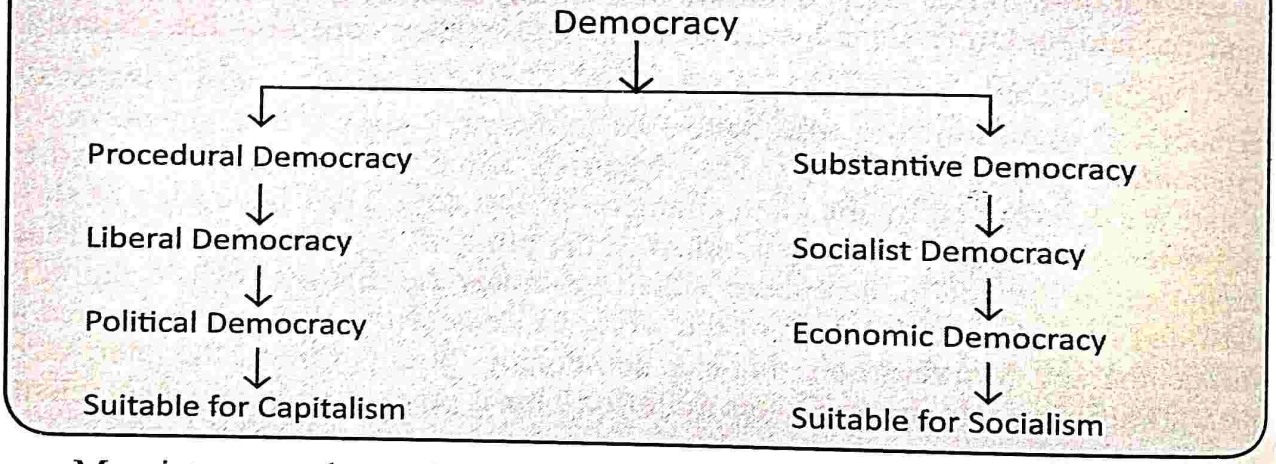
Socialism

Socialism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are placed under social ownership and control and economic activity is primarily devoted to the fulfilment of social needs.

The social needs are estimated by the organized power of the community (*i.e.* usually the government) which makes efforts for their fulfilment by deploying all natural and human resources and getting the results over a definite time frame. Socialism, therefore, relies on planning which ensures full employment, and elimination of wastage of resources on meeting the needs of a particular segment of customers, solely with the profit motive.

Marxists have evolved an alternative political set up which is described as 'socialist democracy' in order to distinguish it from 'liberal democracy'. While liberal democracy is usually identified as 'political democracy', socialist democracy is described as 'economic democracy'. Champions of socialist democracy regard economic organization of society as the foundation of whole social life. They recognize economic power as the key to political power. Alternative forms of democracy as conceived by these two major schools of thought are shown in the following chart:

Alternative Forms of Democracy



Marxists argue that under capitalism all power is concentrated in the hands of capitalists which is used against the working class. On the contrary, under socialism all power is assumed by the working class and it is applied for the liquidation of capitalism. Capitalism is sustained by liberal democracy which accepts the primacy of civil liberties; socialism sustains socialist democracy which accepts the primacy of social-economic rights. In other words, liberal democracy primarily seeks to protect the individual from arbitrary acts of government; it safeguards his personal freedom, freedom of movement, freedom of thought and expression, faith and worship, freedom of association, right to fair trial, equality before the law, etc. Socialist democracy, on the other hand, makes elaborate arrangements to

provide for employment, education, housing, medical care and recreation facilities for the people. Thus China's white paper on 'Building of Political Democracy in China' (2005) focused on the importance of economic development and social stability in establishing a democracy. In this document the term 'political democracy' is applied to convey the idea of 'socialist democracy' which we have identified as 'economic democracy'. Here it was asserted that the continued rule of the Communist Party was the most important and fundamental principle for developing socialist political democracy in China.

Liberal democracy allows several political parties to come up and to compete for power, but socialist democracy accepts monopoly of a single political party devoted to the interests of the working class. In a liberal democracy, voters have to elect a suitable candidate from several competing candidates whether sponsored by political parties or fighting the election independently. But in a socialist democracy voters have to approve the candidate nominated by the ruling political party. In a liberal democracy, the elected government is the source of decision-making. But in a socialist democracy the ruling political party is the source of decision-making; organs of government simply ratify the decisions so made. Finally, a liberal democracy requires that bureaucracy and judiciary should remain neutral towards politics, but socialist democracy requires them to be committed to the party in power. Salient features of the two systems are shown in the following chart:

Comparative Study of Liberal and Socialist Democracies

The Issue	*Liberal Democracy*	*Socialist Democracy*
Status of the Major Means of Production	Under Private Ownership	Under Public Ownership
Purpose of Production	Primarily Private Profit	Fulfilment of Social Needs
Status of Rights	Primacy of Civil Liberties	Primacy of Social-economic Rights
Status of Political Parties	Several Political Parties Freely Competing for Power	Monopoly of one Political Party representing the Interests of the Working Class
Method of Election	Choice of a Suitable Person from the Competing Candidates	Approval of the Candidate Nominated by the Ruling Political Party
Main Source of Decision-Making	The Elected Government	Political Party in Power
Character of Bureaucracy and Judiciary	Politically Neutral	Committed to the Party in Power

Marxists commend socialist democracy as best suited to overcome the defects of liberal democracy. But champions of liberal democracy do not accept this line of argument, and dub the so-called socialist democracy a dictatorship or a totalitarian system, which represents the antithesis of democracy itself.

Indeed a socialist system cannot be termed as democracy in real sense of the term, because it fails to safeguard liberty of the individual. *Goals of socialism are certainly laudable, but when the procedure of democracy is set aside on the pretext of achieving those goals, we can no longer claim to remain democratic.* We must try to reform the democratic procedure constantly in order to overcome its shortcomings, but adoption of the socialist system in the prevalent form will defeat the idea of democracy itself.

> In a dictatorship, the people are afraid to tell the truth to their leaders; in a democracy, the leaders are afraid to tell the truth to the people.
>
> Richard J. Needham (1976)

VIII
RADICAL THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

Radical theory of democracy contemplates to expand the scope of democracy by recognizing and possibly combining the essential features of procedural and substantive democracy. It is best represented by Macpherson's concept of democracy.

MACPHERSON'S CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

C.B. Macpherson (1911-87), contemporary exponent of the radical theory of democracy, sought to broaden the scope of democracy and to redefine its essential conditions in view of our recent experiences. In his earlier monograph, *The Real World of Democracy* (1966), Macpherson argued that the liberal societies which grant universal suffrage, a choice between political parties, and civil liberties, have no exclusive claim to the title of democracy.

Democracy is a wider phenomenon. Macpherson identifies three variants of democracy which are equally valid if they fulfil certain conditions. The first variant is, of course, liberal democracy which needs a more humane touch. Secondly, Communist countries might qualify as democracies if they granted full intra-party democracy and opened up their closed bureaucratic systems. Finally, Third World countries, which have no experience of Western individualism, could also conform to the ideals of some historical theories of democracy as far as their governments are legitimized by mass enthusiasm. Thus in Macpherson's view different types of systems which undertake to fulfil the aspirations of the masses, enjoy support of the masses and strive for the amelioration of the condition of the masses, qualify as democracies irrespective of the structures and procedures adopted by them for serving these purposes.

Third World

The term 'Third World' refers to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America who were victims of colonial exploitation in the past and are still characterized by a low level of economic and political development as compared to industrially advanced nations of the world. They have adopted different types of constitutions, including the Western type or socialist type, in order to cope with the problems of nation-building and economic development. Broadly speaking, their governments are legitimized by mass enthusiasm rather than by individualism.

In his more elaborate work *Democratic Theory—Essays in Retrieval* (1973), Macpherson attacked the elitist-pluralist theory of democracy as espoused by Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) and Robert Dahl (1915-2014) as well as the utilitarian theory expounded by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). He pointed out that the traditional or classical theory of democracy was erected on a moral foundation. It saw democracy as a developmental process, as a matter of emancipation of humanity. The elitist-pluralist theory, or the empirical theory, on the other hand, treats democracy as a mechanism whose essential function is to maintain equilibrium. Under this theory "democracy is reduced from a humanist aspiration to a market equilibrium system. And although the new orthodox theory claims scientific neutrality, its value judgement is clear enough: whatever works, is right—that is, whatever enables the existing class-stratified society to operate without intolerable friction is best" *(Democratic Theory—Essays in Retrieval;* 1973). The classical theory had throughout treated democracy as the cry of the oppressed, their claims for recognition as equal human beings—a means by which all men could enjoy and develop their human capacities. The exponents of the elitist-pluralist theory have reduced democracy to a means by which men can register their wants as political consumers in the political market. This theory identifies democracy with a static political system which takes the dominant groups in society for granted, whether they are *elite* groups or strong interest groups. With the acceptance of this principle of domination, the principle of equality is relegated to the background, or even considered redundant.

In contrast, Macpherson has developed a new theory of democracy based on a humanist vision; it will emancipate human beings from the constraints of the prevailing competitive social order of the capitalist world and usher in a new era which will promote 'creative freedom'. The empirical theory interprets democratic politics as a market mechanism and ignores the basic class conflict operating in a market situation. In order to understand the real character of capitalism Macpherson has identified the existence of two elements in Western democratic theory : (*a*) The principle of utility-maximization; and (*b*) The principle of power-maximization. Of these, the first element is quite familiar which treats the human being as a consumer of utilities, *i.e.* inherently as a bundle of appetites demanding satisfaction. This idea played a significant role in the growth of capitalism. This is the essence of the original tenets of utilitarianism. The second element, *viz.* the principle of maximization of powers, may be traced to J.S. Mill's modification of orthodox utilitarianism. It is an ethical concept which interprets man as a *doer*

and *creator*; rather than merely as a consumer and satisfaction-seeker. In order to explicate this theory Macpherson draws a distinction between two types of power: (*a*) *Developmental power*, and (*b*) *Extractive power*. Developmental power signifies man's ability to use his own capacities creatively, for the fulfilment of his self-appointed goals. Extractive power, on the other hand, stands for power over others—man's ability to use other men's capacities to extract benefits for himself.

Macpherson on the Genesis of Creative Freedom

The Issue	*Utilitarian View*	*Moralist View*
Conception of Human Nature	As a Consumer	As a *Doer* and *Creator*
Goal of Human Life	Maximization of Utilities	Maximization of Powers
Requisite Type of Power	Extractive Power	Developmental Power
Consequence of the Use of Power	Satisfaction of Material Wants	Creative Freedom

Macpherson has brilliantly argued that the capitalist system creates conditions under which non-owners of property enjoy negligible amount of developmental power whereas extractive power remains the sole preserve of the owners of land and capital. The concept of *possessive individualism*—the underlying idea behind liberalism since its inception—asserts that the individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, owing nothing to society for these endowments. This idea gives rise to a system in which social relations between individuals are transformed into market relations. In a *simple exchange economy* where means of production are simple and inexpensive, an individual is the owner of the means of production as well as the means of labour. But in a capitalist economy where means of production are complex and very expensive, the means of labour are detached from the means of production. As a result, labour is regarded as a commodity which can be bought and sold in an open market. The means of production are owned by a small capitalist class which operates them solely with a profit motive, with little regard for humanist values. Members of the working class are forced to sell their labour according to needs of the market, with little scope for using their energies and skills creatively in an atmosphere of freedom. The power of a horse or machine may be defined as the amount of work it can do whether it is set to work or not. But human being is endowed with an urge for creativity—for making his unique contribution to society according to his talents. These talents are bound to rot in a capitalist economy where demand for work is governed by the calculations of private profit-seekers.

CONCLUSION

Macpherson concedes that existing liberal democracies have conserved civil and political liberties more effectively than existing socialist regimes. However,

he suggests to combine a system of socialist ownership with the institutions of liberal democracy in order to prevent the use of extractive power and to promote developmental powers of all human beings. He recommends the expansion of welfare-state functions to facilitate allocation of goods and services to the people on grounds of need rather than desert determined by the rules of the capitalist economy. Thus he seeks to evolve a system in which the advantages of capitalist and socialist societies shall be combined—a difficult proposition indeed! As Norman Barry has observed: "The difficulty with Macpherson's argument is that he evaluates existing liberal democracy by reference to some 'ideal version' of democracy, rather than by comparing it directly to existing alternatives" *(An Introduction to Modern Political Theory;* 1989). Macpherson's ideal is, of course, very difficult to realize in the prevailing scarcity situation. Yet efforts have to be made to meet the conflicting demands on all fronts as far as feasible.

In a nutshell, *democracy as an ideal* can neither be achieved only through political institutions, nor only through the transformation of the mode of production. It *has to be achieved* in all spheres simultaneously : in the legal and political sphere *through constitutional structures;* in the economic sphere *through socialist mode of material production;* and in the cultural sphere *through inculcation of new values of human equality,* and so on.

IX
CONCEPT OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

NATURE AND JUSTIFICATION OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Deliberative democracy marks a departure from the traditional theory of democracy. While traditional democratic theory regards voting as the source of legitimacy of democratic decision-making, for deliberative democracy a democratic decision will be regarded as legitimate only if it is the outcome of authentic deliberation. Deliberation largely implies the process of arriving at consensus; but if it fails to evolve consensus, it may resort to voting and accept majority rule as a working formula.

Deliberation

Deliberation refers to the process whereby the decision-makers or interested citizens consult each other and try to come to a conclusion after a careful and often lengthy consideration of all conceivable aspects of an important subject involving public interest.

Some theorists of deliberative democracy insist on deliberation among the actual decision-makers such as legislators, cabinets and even courts. Others focus on decision-making among ordinary citizens. In both cases, authentic deliberation is regarded a necessary condition of decision-making. In the case of legislators, etc. it requires that the decision-makers are not affected by unequal political power,

such as the power based on economic resources or wealth of the decision-makers or the support of powerful interest groups extended to them. In the case of ordinary citizens, those skilled in rhetoric should not be allowed to sway the decision in their favour. It is also conceded that deliberation among ordinary citizens largely helps to form public opinion rather than create binding laws. However, actual decision-makers cannot afford to ignore the public opinion in the process of their deliberation.

Jürgen Habermas and Joshua Cohen are regarded the chief exponents of the theory of deliberative democracy. Habermas (*Legitimation Crisis*; 1975) argued that democracy should be viewed as a method of communication. In his view, legitimacy of democratic decision-making arises from free, public and rational discussion among competent citizens deliberating in an atmosphere of openness and equality. This ideal situation is expected to inculcate civic virtue among people where consideration of public interest seeks to eliminate all private interests. Cohen ('Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy', in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, ed. J. Bohman and W.Rehg; 1997) observed: "Outcomes are democratically legitimate if and only if they could be the object of a free and reasoned argument among equals."

Champions of deliberative democracy contend that in an open debate, private interests are ultimately dominated by the public interest. Authentic debate tends to appeal to the public good where stronger argument rather than the stronger speaker comes to prevail. Attempt is first made to arrive at a consensus. If deliberation does not yield consensus, the deliberators resort to voting for arriving at a decision. James Fishkin and Robert Luskin ('Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion', *Acta Politica*; 2005) have enumerated five qualifications of deliberative discussion: (*a*) It should be well informed so that arguments are supported by appropriate and reasonably accurate factual claims; (*b*) It should be balanced so that arguments are met by contrary arguments; (*c*) It should be conscientious so that all participants are willing to talk and listen, with civility and respect; (*d*) It should be substantive so that arguments are considered sincerely on their merits, not affected by the differential skills of different speakers; and finally, (*e*) It should be comprehensive so that all points of view held by significant portions of the population receive adequate attention. It may be hoped that if democratic deliberation fulfils these conditions, democracy will function in a more meaningful way.

MECHANISM OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Mechanism of deliberative democracy largely seeks to modify the existing mechanism of liberal democracy in some important details. At the outset, it is important to note that deliberative democracy implies an attempt to reconcile two different models of democratic thought: 'Democracy as a popular rule' and 'Democracy as the bulwark of personal freedom'. Advocates of democracy as a popular rule argue that democratic decision-making should reflect popular will as if people are ruling themselves as free and equal citizens rather than being ruled by the arbitrary will of public officials. On the other hand, advocates of personal freedom argue that democratic decision-making should be the outcome of people's

exercise of personal freedom, which implies freedom of thought, speech, press, movement, association and assembly, freedom of religion, right to hold personal property, freedom to vote and to contest for a public office, freedon from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of rule of law.

Rule of Law

Rule of law refers to the principle which requires that the law of the land should be properly defined and notified so that the citizens know as to how it will affect them; any action against an Individual should be taken only under that law, and not on any other basis. Hence, no one should be arbitrarily arrested, nor punished without a fair trial.

On the one hand, the notion of democracy as a popular rule is primarily concerned with the content of democratic decision-making so that it conforms to the popular will. Institutions and procedures of democracy can be adjusted to meet this requirement. On the other hand, the notion of democracy as the bulwark of personal freedom accords priority to the liberties of individuals. Any decision taken by the institutions which respect these liberties will be treated as legitimate. This view of democracy gives due recognition to the institutions of judicial review, separation of powers, checks and balances, etc., which are designed to protect personal freedom of the citizens.

Judicial Review

In a country with a written constitution, judicial review refers to the power of higher courts to examine the validity of any rule, enactment, administrative order or action in the light of the provisions, underlying principles or spirit of the constitution. If the court declares it to be unconstitutional, it would become null and void.

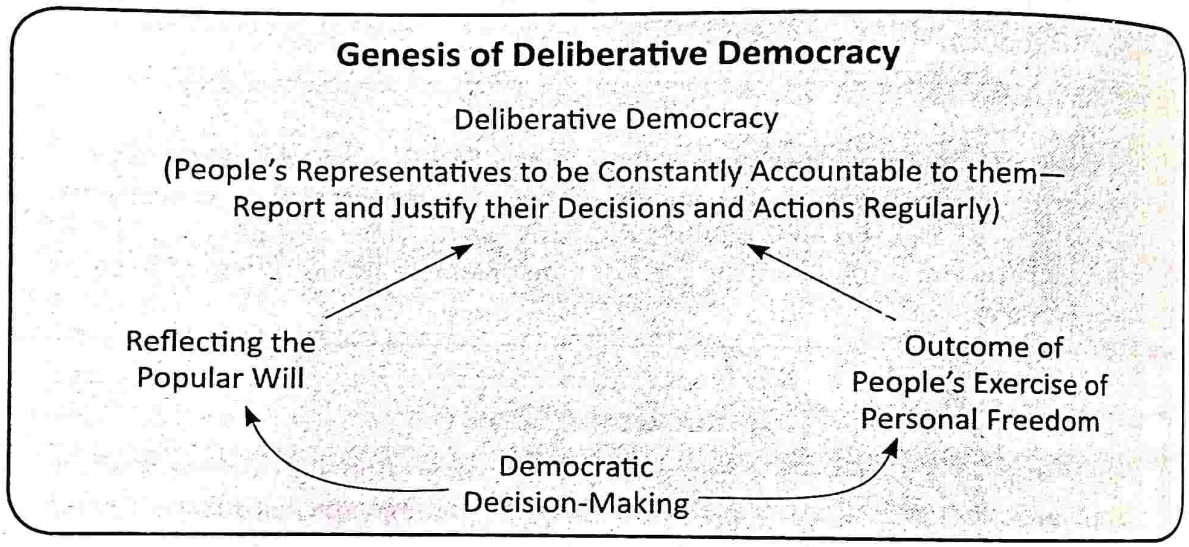
Separation of Powers

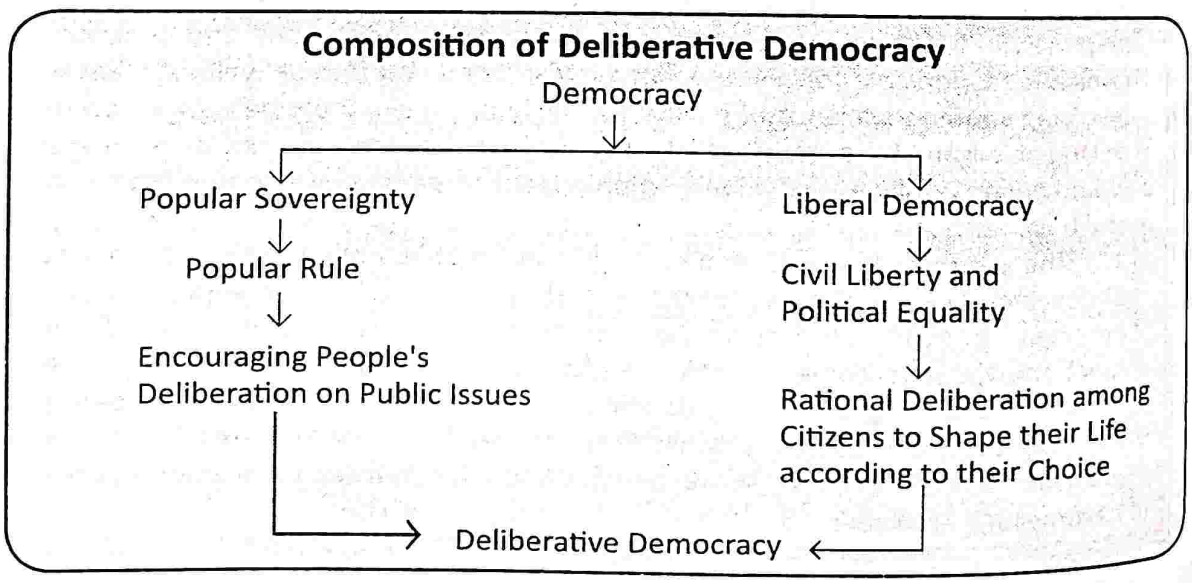
Separation of powers refers to a principle of constitutional government which stipulates that the three branches of government, *viz*. the legislature (which is responsible for law-making and policy decision), the executive (which is responsible for law-enforcement and policy implementation) and judiciary (which is responsible for giving judgement in criminal cases as well as in cases involving conflicting claims of parties to a legal dispute) should be kept separate so that no organ of the state is allowed to exercise absolute powers. This principle would become fully effective only when it is accompanied by a system of checks and balances.

The principle of checks and balances implies that while the three branches of government—legislature, executive and judiciary—are to be kept separate, no single branch is allowed to become all-powerful even in its own area of functioning. For example, according to American constitutional practice, no bill passed by the Congress (the legislature) would become law unless it receives the assent of the President (the chief executive). Then the Supreme Court (the judiciary) retains the power to declare any law as unconstitutional whereupon it becomes null and void.

Now deliberative democracy requires that democratic decision-making should strike a balance between personal freedom and popular rule. It should be used as a means of encouraging public deliberation on issues that are best understood through open, deliberative processes. Deliberative democracy does not subscribe to the model of politics where each individual is fighting to secure his self-interest. It rather promotes a model of politics where each individual is trying to persuade others to find a reasonable solution of public issues. In other words, people in a deliberative democracy try to influence each other through an accepted mode of reasoned argument, that is to win their heart through an appeal to the prevalent value system. At the same time it pays due regard to personal freedom of every individual.

Doesn't this process diminish autonomy of the individual? When others are allowed to persuade me according to their convictions, shall I not be deprived of the opportunity of living according to my choice? Defenders of deliberative democracy tell me that my autonomy doesn't simply consist in living according to my choice. It requires me to have a share in political decisions also, which affect me as well as others. This is made possible only through the mechanism of deliberative democracy.





Deliberative democracy does not rule out division of labour between citizens and professional politicians. While it requires the citizens to participate in deliberation on public issues and thereby supplement the wisdom of politicians, it also demands constant public accountability of politicians. It requires the politicians to report and justify their decisions and actions to the people regularly and thereby help them to deliberate further on important public issues.

Among the classical thinkers, Jean-Jaques Rousseau (1712-78), French philosopher, had observed that representative democracy was not conducive to the spirit of democracy. In his view, when legislative function is assigned to representative institutions, these institutions evolve their special interests forgetting the interest of the community. In order to safeguard the interest of the community, each piece of legislation should be ratified by the community itself. The idea of deliberative democracy coincides with this view. Contemporary champions of deliberative democracy include Michael Walzer (*Spheres of Justice*; 1983), J. Cohen and J. Rogers (*On Democracy: Toward a Transformation of American Society*; 1983), Bernard Manin ('On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation', *Political Theory*; 1987), S.L. Hurley (*Natural Reasons: Personality and Polity*; 1989), and J .S. Fishkin (*Democracy and Deliberation*; 1991).

The general theory of liberal democracy expects each individual to form his political attitude by considering the best way to secure his self-interest. On the other hand, the theory of deliberative democracy expects each individual to form his political attitude by considering the best way to secure the 'public good'.

> When citizens bargain and negotiate, they may learn how better to get what they want. But when they deliberate, they can expand their knowledge, including their self-understanding as well as their collective understanding of what will best serve their fellow citizens.
>
> Dennis Thompson (2007)

X
PARADOX OF DEMOCRACY

Working of democracy is sometimes required to fulfil certain conditions which could be mutually contradictory. Such a situation is described as a 'paradox of democracy'. In such a situation we must find out an arrangement that would resolve the paradox in question.

What is the paradox of democracy? There can't be a fixed answer to this question. We may come across various types of situations which involve the paradox of democracy. At best we can refer to a few situations which could be used to illustrate the paradox of democracy. Several writers have given the account of such situations. Of these, we may refer to two important cases for the purpose of illustration.

CASE ONE

Champions of democracy usually invoke the ideals of French Revolution (1789)—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity — as their cherished values. How far democracy is able to realize these values in practice?

Liberty

Liberty refers to a condition in which an individual does not face unreasonable restraints while making full use of his wisdom and abilities in fulfilling his self-appointed goals.

Equality

Equality refers to a principle of social organization which gives equal importance to wisdom of each individual and rules out undue discrimination in his way to self-development.

The principle of equality also requires the reduction of gross economic inequalities in society in order to promote substantive equality of opportunity.

Fraternity

Fraternity refers to a sentiment which informs the members of a community who share a common culture, common values, an awareness of the common interest, and engage in common effort to achieve their social goal.

Of these three principles, fraternity implies a sentiment which can be realized only when the first two principles of liberty and equality have been fully realized. We have not yet reached that stage. So the contemporary debate on the working of democracy is focused on the realization of liberty and equality. Liberals as well as Marxists have pointed to the difficulties in realizing these principles together. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx observed that makers of the French Revolution had raised the slogan of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' to enlist the support of masses. But they settled for liberty which served their interest, *i.e.* the interest of the new entrepreneurial class of those days. Their goal of liberty was confined to ensuring inviolability of property. They did not make an effort to win freedom for common man who did not own private property. Marxists still argue that liberal democracy serves the interests of the capitalist class and continues to exploit the working class, not to speak of trying for their emancipation. In other words, the pursuit of liberty in practice defeats the goal of equality.

Some prominent liberal thinkers have argued that democratic government is intended to maintain the rights of individuals, including liberty and equality, but in practice it has failed to protect these rights together. If there is a clash between liberty and equality, which of the two should be treated as the essence of democracy? Should democratic government be regarded a tool of liberty and property, or a tool of equality and social justice? Benjamin R. Barber has described this situation as the democratic paradox :

The democratic paradox has been that government as the tool of individuals who are constituted in a community has appeared as the enemy of the rights of individuals

('Democracy' in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, edited by David Miller; 1987).

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59) and John Stuart Mill (1806-73) had warned that democracy conceded equality of all individuals and thereby established the authority of numbers. This led to the tyranny of majority and suppression of minority opinion. Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America* (1835-40) observed that the principle of equality in a democratic set up encouraged individual's subservience to public opinion which demanded conformity to the generally held attitudes and standards, as if the dissenters were always wrong. Tocqueville warned that the demand for equality in the sphere of freedom of opinion should not be pressed to the extent of total suppression of the minority opinion. John Stuart Mill was so impressed by this argument that in his famous essay *On Liberty* (1859) he argued that if the opinion of a single individual was different from the rest of society, that society had no right to silence him. Thus Mill sought to resolve the paradox of democracy by ensuring full freedom of expression within a democratic set up.

> With all my admiration and love for democracy, I am not prepared to accept the statement that the largest number of people are always right.
>
> Jawaharlal Nehru

> If democracy means surrendering one's judgement to the crowd then let this democracy go to hell.
>
> Jawaharlal Nehru

> Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

It is important to note that liberals like Tocqueville and J.S. Mill sought to resolve the conflict between liberty and equality in the political sphere within a democratic system. Many liberal thinkers like H.J. Laski (1893-1950) and R.H. Tawney (1880-1962) have dealt with the conflict between liberty and equality in the economic sphere under a democratic system. They have argued that unbridled economic freedom tends to widen the gap between rich and poor. The rich are able to multiply their property by using it as a means to hire best talents and labour power. Since the poor are constrained to work on the terms and conditions dictated by the owners of property, their freedom is substantially curtailed. Thus freedom of the rich becomes unfreedom of the poor. These thinkers insist that the democratic state should take effective steps for the reduction of socio-economic inequalities to ensure larger freedom for the deprived sections. These steps would include taxation of the rich to provide for a network of social services and social security for the poor. In short, they recommend to set up welfare state to resolve the democratic paradox between liberty and equality in the economic sphere.

CASE TWO

Anthony Downs, in *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), observed that the conduct of democracy is analogous to the problem of collective goods. In economics, the term 'collective goods' refers to those goods and services which can only be provided on a group basis; the quantity of such goods supplied to any one individual cannot be varied without affecting other members of the group. For example, national defence and police protection are provided to the community on collective basis. Here government decides on the amount of such products to be provided to different members of the community for the provision of these goods. It is virtually impossible to get consumers of these goods to reveal their preferences because rational consumers will attempt to become free-riders. Each of such consumers will tend to understate his demand in the hope of avoiding his share of cost.

Free Rider = A person who is not willing to pay for, or bear his share of burden toward the provision of common services and benefits which are otherwise available to everybody.

Now in a democracy also it is necessary that no citizen should be excluded from the benefit or burden of maintaining the democratic system. If a citizen is allowed to behave like a rational consumer, he will hardly find democratic elections to be rewarding. As a cost-benefit calculator, he will realize that his share of benefits from these elections is too small in comparison to his share of cost of these elections. His individual vote would have an insignificant effect on the choice of a very large electorate, but as a tax-payer he would have to pay a substantial amount toward financing these elections. So the maintenance of a huge electoral machinery would seem to be irrational from an individual's point of view.

Should we disband the democratic system finding it unprofitable and irrational? If we still wish to maintain it, we shall have to find its justification on some more rational grounds. William Riker and Peter Ordeshook ('A Theory of the Calculus of Voting', *American Political Science Review*; 1968) have observed that citizens obtain benefits from voting as a satisfaction gained in living up to the democratic ethic of voting. In other words, we like to maintain a democratic system for its moral benefits, not for its material benefits. Even if we find it irrational as cost-benefit calculators, we find it perfectly rational as moral deliberators.

R.E. Goodin (*Political Theory and Public Policy*; 1982) has argued that we vote because we recognize an obligation to do so; we do not simply accord greater weight to this obligation in an ordinary decision calculus. Electoral choice need not be just another component of a self-interested calculus, but rather a product of moral understanding and dedication to furthering social justice. The paradox of democracy created by self-interested calculators can be set aside by moral deliberators who commend democracy for its moral benefits. If we recall the metaphor of collective goods, we maintain national defence, police protection, fire-fighting machinery, etc. to give us a sense of security against unforeseen circumstances rather than in exercise of our choice as rational consumers. So we maintain democracy to give us a sense of dignity.

XI
DEMOCRACY AS A WAY OF LIFE

Conventional exponents of democracy largely treated it as a form of government. Champions of liberal democracy focus on politics as a process of group conflict, party competition and struggle for power which are sought to be resolved through democratic method. However, some philosophers have tried to shift their focus from this process to the analysis of democracy as a way of life. John Dewey (1859-1952), American philosopher, is the chief representative of this school of thought.

Dewey's alternative theory of democracy seeks to connect it with the process of how people form judgements, how they communicate with each other, and how they come together to solve problems. In his celebrated work *Democracy and Education* (1961), Dewey sought to compare democratic method to the scientific method in which public is conceived as a community of inquirers trying to solve their common problems. Freedom of speech, periodic elections and other democratic institutions maintained by the liberal democracy enable people to adopt rational attitudes in politics. Successful democratic politics does not depend on the judgement of each citizen considered separately. When people arrive at the judgement through their constant interaction, their judgement is likely to prove sufficiently sound.

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.
>
> John Dewey

> The method of democracy is to bring...conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged.
>
> John Dewey

Dewey defines majority rule as a process whereby the majority is formed, particularly through free communication and free association between citizens. When citizens communicate, talk, share their ideas and try them out so as to test their consequences, a democratic public comes into existence in the real sense of the term. In short, the scientific method of inquiry, communication and experimentation before arriving at a conclusion is the hallmark of the democratic public arriving at a judgement about public issues.

Dewey held that the creation of the democratic public was best accomplished in small groups which allowed close communication between their members and close coordination in the process of arriving at collective judgement. He argued that membership of voluntary associations and local communities could help individuals to become democratic citizens. But the increasing industrialization, urbanization, geographical mobility and the growth of the state pose a serious challenge to the development of democracy as a way of life. However, its message

is clear: We should organize our society into small, coherent communities to give effect to the democratic principle. This corresponds to the current slogan of the environmentalists : *Small is beautiful.*

Another implication of treating democracy as a way of life is associated with the demand of *democratization* at all levels, such as in political parties, industrial management as well as university administration. It means that those affected by particular institutional decisions should have their say or representation at the decision-making level. Thus the members of a political party should have an effective say in drawing out policy and programme of their party; workers of a factory should have effective say in deciding production policy and the issues relating to industrial management. Similarly, teachers and students should have a say in deciding educational policy. In short, democracy as a way of life requires the end of authoritarianism at all levels, including school and family levels. This does not mean the end of guidance and supervision by the superiors, but only that the decision should be taken in consultation with and with the consent of those affected by such decision.

> Democracy means tolerance, tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but of those who do not agree with us.
>
> Jawaharlal Nehru

Q 1. Elucidate the concept of liberal democracy. Examine its justification offered by elitist and pluralist theories of democracy.

2. "Democracy is essentially a contested concept." Do you agree with this statement? Examine the debate between the champions of procedural democracy and substantive democracy.

3. Write short, critical notes on : (*a*) Popular Sovereignty; (*b*) Participatory Democracy; (*c*) People's Democracy; (*d*) Deliberative Democracy; (*e*) Paradox of Democracy; and (*f*) Democracy as a way of life.

6

Concept of Liberty

I
MEANING OF LIBERTY

The concept of liberty or freedom involves an important issue of political philosophy. The terms 'liberty' and 'freedom' are usually applied to convey the same idea. Broadly speaking, 'freedom' stands for a wider notion while 'liberty' refers to a particular aspect of freedom. The ideal of freedom is everywhere held in high esteem. That is why liberal writers who are committed to the ideal of liberty use the terms 'liberty' and 'freedom' interchangeably but idealists, Marxists and others prefer to use the term 'freedom' to convey this idea.

Broadly speaking, the term 'freedom' implies two things: (*a*) The quality of human being; and (*b*) The condition of human being. Of these, liberty often conveys the second sense, *i.e.* the condition of human being. It is interesting to note that politics is largely concerned with the second sense, *i.e.* the condition of human being while philosophy is concerned with freedom in both senses of the term. In political philosophy we may have to refer to these senses in appropriate contexts.

FREEDOM AS THE QUALITY OF HUMAN BEING

When we consider freedom as the quality of human being, we assert that only a human being, as distinguished from other living beings, is capable of freedom. Animals, birds and insects are governed by the rule of the 'struggle for existence' and 'survival of the fittest'—the fittest is the one physically strongest and cleverest. They have no 'aim of life' beyond mere existence. Man as *homo sapiens* has distinguished himself from other living beings as he claims to have an aim in his life. He has created the whole complex of institutions—civilization and culture—in pursuance of this aim. Animals are mere slaves of nature; man has largely learnt to tame, control and harness nature to serve his purpose of life. Freedom is the distinctive quality of man.

Friedrich Engels (1820-95), a close associate of Karl Marx (1818-83), sought

to define freedom as the quality of human being by drawing a distinction between necessity and freedom. Necessity denotes the condition under which the life of man is governed by laws of nature, such as the law of gravitational force, which exist independently of man's will. Man can acquire scientific knowledge of these laws for his own benefit, but cannot change them at his will. As Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring* (1878), has elucidated:

> Necessity is *blind* only *in so far as it is not understood...* Freedom does not consist in any dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends.

This applies both to the laws of external nature and to laws of our own nature. As Engels has further observed :

> Freedom, therefore, consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is, therefore, necessarily a product of historical development. The first men who separated themselves from the animal kingdom were in all essentials as unfree as the animals themselves, but each step forward in the field of culture was a step towards freedom.

In short, *freedom as the quality of human being consists in obtaining scientific knowledge of the inexorable laws of nature and applying them for the benefit of mankind.* In the absence of such knowledge human beings are bound to remain slaves of nature; their ignorance could prove disastrous for them. In other words, human beings' capacity to gain scientific knowledge is the source of their freedom.

FREEDOM AS THE CONDITION OF HUMAN BEING

When we consider freedom as the condition of human being, we enter the realm of liberty which is usually defined as 'absence of constraint'. Constraint or restraint may be internal as well as external. In politics we are largely concerned with external restraint; in philosophy we think of internal as well as external restraint. However, when we contemplate positive action by the state for 'the removal of a constraint', we return to the realm of politics. So the concept of liberty has very wide implications in the sphere of political philosophy.

We demand liberty for the human being (as a condition of life) because we treat him to be a rational creature. In this sense, liberty implies that when a human being applies his rational faculty and comes to know what is best for him (and also for society because as a rational being he cannot think of something which is good for him, and not for society), he should have the ability to achieve it, and his activity should not be hindered by any external, unreasonable restraint. So far our demand is confined to the removal of external restraint; hence it is termed as *negative liberty.*

If a rational agent has no freedom or liberty, he will not be able to make best use of his faculties of mind and body. Absence of freedom in this sense means the condition of slavery or bondage. A slave is not free to do what he wants, even if

he can; he is bound to do what his master wants him to do. Some ancient Greek philosophers called *Stoics* held that the slave could be as free as the emperor on his throne. They argued that the slave could refuse to comply with the order of his master. This argument is not valid because if the slave refused to comply, he could be beaten to death by his master. So the choice for the slave was between compliance and being beaten to death! Stoics advised the slave to be indifferent to death.

Stoics

The term 'Stoics' refers to a group of ancient Greek philosophers who identified Reason with Nature; they held that a "life consistent with Nature" should be the goal of human existence. Stoics taught man's identification with the impartial, inevitable, moral order of the universe which would render him indifferent to poverty, pain and death. If a slave chooses to live according to his conscience, and becomes indifferent to its consequences, including death, he is as free as the emperor on his throne.

Champions of capitalism similarly argued that the worker is as free as the capitalist under this system because both are free to desert each other! Here, too, choice for the worker is between working under oppressive conditions or starving! The proper test of freedom for an individual is whether he has a real choice before him. A person who is entangled between the devil and the deep sea can have no freedom of choice.

Capitalism

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production, where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as market demand.

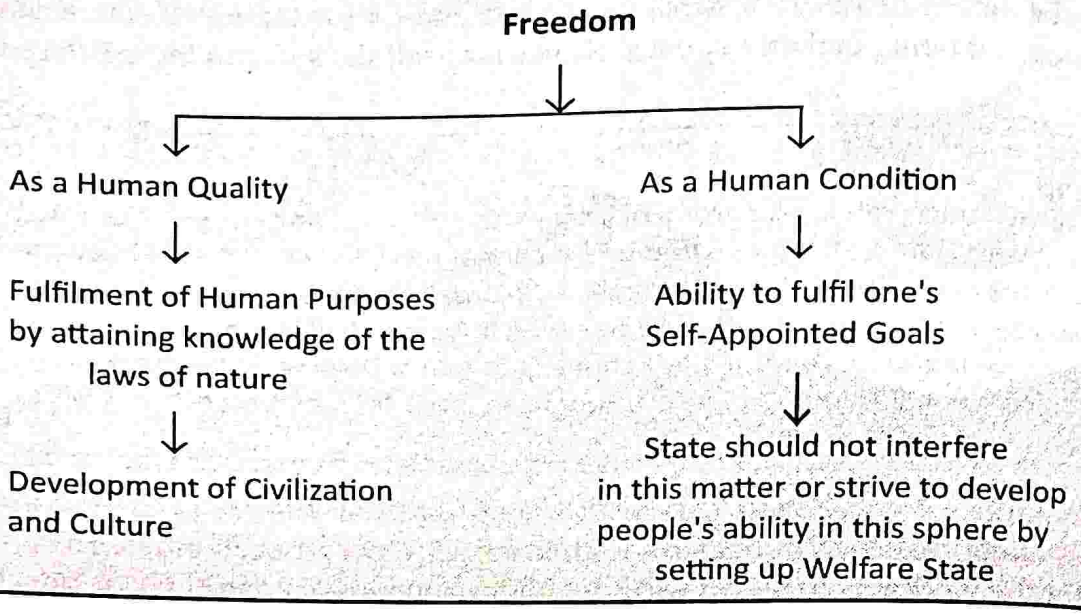
The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as her liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-65)

Now a man may not be free even if there is no external restraint. For example, when a person is suffering from physical pain or is mentally disturbed, he may not be able to do what he loves to do. Man is not only a rational creature, he is also a sensitive creature. He may feel constrained due to hunger, thirst or fatigue. So freedom in the widest sense requires that man should not feel any internal or external constraint. This means freedom from physical pain, disease, ignorance, fear or want. It is very difficult to look for such freedom in the real world. However, we can judge a state by its performance in the sphere of minimizing all possible constraints in the life of its citizens. This step would enhance their *positive liberty*

which can be secured by setting up the welfare state.

An Overview of the Nature of Freedom


Freedom
As a Human Quality
As a Human Condition
Fulfilment of Human Purposes by attaining knowledge of the laws of nature
Development of Civilization and Culture
Ability to fulfil one's Self-Appointed Goals
State should not interfere in this matter or strive to develop people's ability in this sphere by setting up Welfare State

Welfare State

Welfare State refers to the state that safeguards liberty of its citizens and also takes care of satisfying their basic needs, *e.g.* food, clothing, shelter, health care, elementary education and recreation, etc. — particularly of those who cannot afford these things from their own income or other resources. It makes use of public resources and taxation of the relatively rich to provide for a vast network of social services and social security.

Again, we wish to have freedom for the rational agent. A person under certain circumstances may depart from rational thinking and may forget the value of freedom. A slave may feel contented with his slavery. Some people may turn to be slaves of superstitions, irrational customs and social practices. Others may be swayed by consumer culture and may become indifferent to joys of nature. They may not be inclined to derive any pleasure from the treasures of literature, art and music which enable a man to rise above trivial wants. If a person is not free in the real sense, and still he is not keen to have freedom, efforts should be made to arouse his conscience and make him anxious to win his freedom.

Consumer Culture

Consumer culture refers to the primacy of such values and beliefs in a society which regard the consumption of goods and services as the highest aim of life and the symbols of social prestige. In such a society, sublime values of life like self-control, public-spiritedness and artistic tastes are relegated to the back seat.

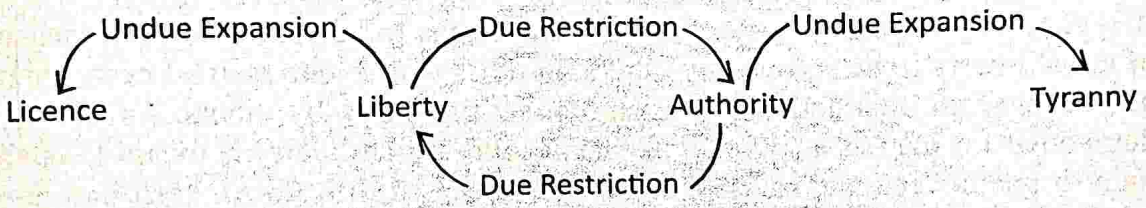
When a slave begins to take pride in his fetters and hugs them like precious ornaments, the triumph of the slave-owner is complete.

Mahatma Gandhi

II
SCOPE OF LIBERTY

The problem of liberty involves the adjustment of claims between individual and society (or community). The state comes into the picture because it is the instrument or agency for regulating their relations. If the claim of the individual is stretched to an extreme in utter disregard of the interest of society, liberty would be reduced to 'licence'. On the other hand, if liberty of the individual is increasingly restricted in the supposed interest of society, the result would be an unconditional submission to authority, hence the loss of liberty amounting to tyranny. It is, therefore, essential to draw a distinction between liberty and licence on the one hand, and to fix the proper frontier between liberty and authority, on the other.

Relation Between Liberty and Authority, Liberty and Licence



Liberty demands due restriction on Authority;
Authority demands due restriction on Liberty;
Undue expansion of Liberty results in Licence;
Undue expansion of Authority results in Tyranny.

(Tyranny = a cruel, unjust and oppressive rule of a person or a small group of people who exercise absolute power over everyone else within their jurisdiction.)

LIBERTY AND LICENCE

When liberty is interpreted as the absence or removal of all restraints on the actions of individual in utter disregard of the interest of other individuals, liberty degenerates into licence. Such a condition is not compatible with the maintenance of social order, nor with the maintenance of liberty itself. In that case, one man's liberty would become another's constraint or oppression; liberty of the strong would amount to suppression of the weak; liberty of the wolf would amount to death of the innocent sheep; the large fish will be free to swallow the smaller one, and there would be a still larger fish to swallow the former. A thief's liberty to take away anybody's property would become a threat to everybody's security. A driver's freedom to drive at any speed in any direction at his own whim would

endanger the life and liberty of all users of the road. Such a situation is obviously self-contradictory. It cannot be permitted in a civil society, otherwise it would defeat the very purpose of social organization.

If freedom is not to become a prerogative of a single individual, or for that matter of a group of individuals, it must be regulated in such a way that none shall use his freedom so as to destroy the freedom of others. As L.T. Hobhouse, in his *The Elements of Social Justice* (1922), has argued: "The unchartered freedom of one would be the conditional servitude of all but one, and conversely a freedom to be enjoyed by all must impose some restraint upon all." Ernest Barker, in his *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (1951), has sought to apply this principle in the wider socio-economic context:

> The need of liberty for each is necessarily qualified and conditioned by the need of liberty for all...The liberty of the owner of capital to determine the conditions of work in the factory which he owns is a relative liberty which must be adjusted to the liberty of the worker to do his work under such conditions as leave him still a free agent and give him also a share in the determination of the conditions of work. Because the liberty of each is, thus, relative to that of others, and has to be adjusted to that of others, it must always be regulated; and indeed it would not exist unless it were regulated.

LIBERTY AND AUTHORITY

It is now evident that liberty of the individual has to be restricted by a measure of equal liberty to be enjoyed by others. In other words, one man's liberty should not become an obstruction in the enjoyment of liberty by others. As liberty is demanded for man as a 'rational agent', it follows that liberty is meant to enable men to pursue 'rational objects' or 'ideal objects'. If they do so, each individual shall pursue his happiness in consonance with the happiness of society; and individual's good will become an integral part of the social good. In such a perfect state, no regulations would be necessary. But since, in the real world, individuals are not perfect—they are only capable of perfection— regulation of liberty becomes necessary to safeguard liberty itself. As Barker has further observed:

> Liberty within the State is thus a relative and regulated liberty: it is the greatest common measure of liberty which is possible for all, as determined and defined, (1) by the need of each to enjoy similar and equal liberty with others; and (2) by the need of all to enjoy the specific liberty of realizing specific capacities.

This view of relative and regulated liberty does not dismiss or dilute the essence of liberty. On the contrary it provides for a more substantive foundation thereof. As Barker has concluded:

> A relative and regulated liberty, actually operative and enjoyed, is liberty greater in amount than absolute liberty could ever be—if indeed such liberty could ever exist, or ever amount to anything more than nothing at all.

Regulation of liberty implies the recognition of authority of the state over the individual. If liberty of the individual cannot be permitted to be absolute, can we

allow the authority of the state to become absolute? Thus, the conflict between liberty and authority is no less grave than the conflict between liberty and licence. In other words, if we deny absolute liberty to the individual because no individual is perfect, we cannot accord absolute authority to the state because no state on earth is perfect. The conflict between liberty and authority has remained a thorny issue in political theory. As D.D. Raphael, in his *Problems of Political Philosophy* (1976), has illustrated :

> Most political theorists recognize that individual liberty and State authority conflict with each other, and that a balance has to be struck between them and the values they represent. Some, like Hobbes, are prepared to say that liberty must be severely limited to make way for the benefits of State authority. Others, like Locke and J.S. Mill, think that State authority should be markedly limited so as to leave as much room as possible for liberty.

In any case, limitations on the authority of the state have to be laid down to make authority more meaningful with reference to its social purpose. A state may possess unlimited legal powers. For instance, the British Parliament is regarded as legally omnipotent. But in the real world, no state can afford to exercise unlimited powers. As Raphael has elucidated :

> No State has unlimited practical power to make any law that it pleases, even though it may possess unlimited legal power. A legislature that has any sense and that wants to remain in office will pay more regard to political than to legal possibilities, to what it can effectively do than to what it may legally do.

A state makes law; it has the power to enforce that law by coercion. In other words, the law is backed by sanctions; the state is free to use the methods of compulsion. However, compulsion comprises a physical weapon, not a moral weapon which would be not only more effective, but more conducive to the social purpose of state authority. Thus, state authority would be much more justified if it is backed by moral support and *legitimacy* instead of mere force. Legitimacy denotes the support extended by the people to the state and its law out of their moral beliefs and values.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy refers to the quality of an act or arrangement which is regarded as lawful by those affected by it. In other words, they regard it reasonable and beneficial for themselves as well as for the larger society.

Legitimacy comes from the people. A state is legitimate if people believe that it is necessary for them and that its actions are lawful and valuable to society. As long as its legitimacy is unquestioned, the state will rarely need to use force. But if its legitimacy is widely questioned, the state is in a dangerous situation. A regime is in serious trouble if the people believe that its military is illegitimate, its police brutal, and its courts unfair. It may have power—the ability to get its orders obeyed despite widespread opposition—but it does not have authority based on legitimacy. The authority of state or law would prove most effective only when

most people accepted it on moral grounds. When most people recognize a moral obligation to obey the law, they would be acting from a moral motive, and not under compulsion.

> The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves.
>
> William Hazlitt (1819)

III
DIMENSIONS OF LIBERTY

Liberty may formally be described as 'absence of restraint'. This means that in order to maintain liberty of the individual, the state should not impose any restraints on his activities in various spheres of life. What type of activities of the individual should remain unrestrained? 'Unrestrained' does not mean 'unregulated'. It simply implies that the activities in question should not be subjected to 'unreasonable restraints'. In order to identify the proper sphere of such activities, we may distinguish between civil, political and economic liberty of the individual.

CIVIL LIBERTY

Civil liberty, according to Barker (*Principles of Social and Political Theory*; 1951), is the liberty of man in the capacity of an individual person—his personal liberty. This consists in three somewhat differently expressed articles: (*a*) Physical freedom from injury or threat to the life, health, and movement of the body; (*b*) Intellectual freedom for the expression of thought and belief; and (*c*) Practical freedom of the play of will and the exercise of choice in the general field of contractual action and relations with other persons.

Of these, the first is almost non-controversial. Freedom of movement, etc. should not be restricted except in the interest of public safety, law and order which are themselves essential conditions of freedom. Physical injury, etc. should not be inflicted on anybody except as a punishment for a crime duly proved, and in accordance with the prescribed law and procedure, and by the prescribed authority in this behalf. As for the second article concerning the freedom of thought and belief, various reasons may be advanced in its defence. J.S. Mill (1806-73), most ardent champion of liberty, has brilliantly demonstrated the importance of this freedom from the point of view of the individual as well as for the society, in his famous essay *On Liberty* (1859). The permanent interests of man as a progressive being, according to Mill, depend upon or at least can be furthered by the advancement of knowledge, which flourishes best in an atmosphere of free discussion. In order to direct social policy wisely, it is necessary that there should be freedom to criticize the existing institutions and to put forward unpopular opinions, no matter how offensive they may be to the prevailing attitudes :

The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing

the human race—posterity as well as the existing generation— those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by the collision with error.

The third article of civil liberty mentioned by Barker, *viz.* the freedom of contract, however, needs closer examination. It is generally conceded that people enjoy the freedom to enter into contracts for their mutual advantage, provided that no damage is inflicted on a third party. But the difficulty arises when this freedom is exploited by a stronger party in a bargain to impose very disadvantageous terms on the weaker party. L.T, Hobhouse, in his *The Elements of Social Justice* (1922), therefore insists on the equality of contracting parties in this matter:

> Freedom of contract is insufficiently defined when it is regarded as consisting solely in the absence of control. Freedom of contract implies such a substantial equality between the parties as on the whole leaves to each a real choice between concluding and rejecting the bargain. Where no such equality exists, one party acts under a degree of compulsion.

Absolute freedom of contract, in an extreme case, may be used to allow a man, or even force him, to sell himself to slavery and thereby deprive him of his freedom in perpetuity. Modern judicial thinking, therefore, always views the freedom of contract as a right which should operate under reasonable limitations.

It is important to note that various elements of civil liberty are now clubbed together and described as 'civil liberties'. Protection of civil liberties is regarded an essential feature of liberal democracy.

Civil Liberties

Civil liberties refer to the legal instruments of protection of the individual from arbitrary acts of government. These include personal freedom, freedom of movement, freedom of thought and expression, faith and worship, freedom of association and assembly, right to fair trial, equality before the law, etc.

POLITICAL LIBERTY

Whereas a man enjoys civil liberty in the capacity of an individual person, he enjoys political liberty in the capacity of a citizen. To William Blackstone (1723-80), political liberty meant the power of curbing government, from which it follows that he conceived of government as something external. But in modem democracy, where government is constituted by the people themselves, political liberty is "a liberty not of curbing government, but of constituting and controlling; constituting it by a general act of choice or election, in which we all freely share on the basis of universal suffrage; controlling it by a general and continuous process of discussion, in which we all freely share according to our capacities" (Ernest Barker, *Principles of Social and Political Theory*; 1951).

This view of political liberty postulates the positive right of the people to be

represented in decision-making bodies, and to influence them by freely articulating their views and opinions on the issues of public policy. In effect, it is intended to ensure that the state shall be sensitive and responsible to the prevailing social consciousness.

In any case, mere provision of political liberty in this sense cannot be treated as adequate. Where elections are fought and won with the help of money and manipulative power, and where the media of mass communication are held in ownership or under strong influence of a privileged class, particularly by big business magnates, mere political liberty can hardly secure real or substantive freedom for the people.

ECONOMIC LIBERTY

Economic liberty, broadly speaking, belongs to man in his capacity as a worker whether with hand or brain, engaged in some gainful occupation or service. In this sense, Barker suggests that economic liberty is implied in the articles of civil liberty already enumerated. In fact, however, economic liberty is a ticklish issue. It is capable of conflicting interpretations by conflicting parties: employer and worker, trader and consumer, landlord and tenant, etc. One party would interpret it as the freedom to secure maximum profit; the other would insist on reasonable terms, reasonable price and quality, reasonable rent, etc. Under such circumstances, if the stronger party is not curbed to safeguard the interests of the weaker party, the principle of liberty will be reduced to mockery. This is the sphere where the adjustment between the claims of liberty and equality becomes necessary. As R.H. Tawney, in his *Equality* (1938), has significantly observed:

> When liberty is construed, realistically, as implying not merely a minimum of civil and political rights, but the securities that the economically weak will not be at the mercy of the economically strong, and that the control of those aspects of economic life by which all are affected will be amenable, in the last resort, to the will of all, a large measure of equality, so far from being inimical to liberty, is essential to it.

In short, it is in the economic sphere that the claims of negative liberty and positive liberty come into direct conflict and confrontation. Unless social policy is geared to safeguard the interests of the vulnerable sections in this sphere, the application of the principle of liberty or freedom would be devoid of any content or substance. The idea of economic liberty reaches its logical conclusion in the concept of social justice.

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

IV
LIBERAL-INDIVIDUALIST VIEW OF LIBERTY

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE LIBERTY : (a) THE EARLY DEBATE

Liberal writers use the terms 'liberty' and 'freedom' synonymously. For them, liberty or freedom is the supreme value which must be the guiding principle of all public policy. It is, generally, the liberty of individual which they wish to protect, and it is defined as 'the absence of restraint' or 'the absence of constraint or coercion'. What types of constraints beset the man which are sought to be removed in pursuance of the principle of liberty or freedom?

To illustrate this point, we may refer to the *Atlantic Charter* (1941), a declaration of 'Four Freedoms', which was drawn up during the Second World War (1939-45) by President Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Churchill of the United Kingdom to indicate their war aims. The four freedoms included : freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from fear, freedom from want. Can we classify these four freedoms on the basis of some common features? D.D. Raphael, in his *Problems of Political Philosophy* (1976), has identified two pairs comprising these four freedoms:

> The first pair of freedoms specify two kinds of action which should be free or unrestrained; they answer the question, freedom to do what? 'Freedom of speech' is freedom to say what one likes. 'Freedom of worship' is freedom to practise whatever religion one chooses. The second pair of freedoms in the Atlantic Charter specify two kinds of restraint which should be removed or prevented; they answer the question, freedom from what? 'Freedom from fear' claims that men should not be prevented by fear from doing whatever they choose to do, fear of a Government with secret police such as the Nazis used, or fear of war and insecurity. 'Freedom from want' claims that men should not be prevented by want from doing what they would choose to do, want or poverty due to unemployment, the lack of living wage, or the inability to work because of sickness or old age.

It is significant that the two types of freedoms, included in the said Charter of four freedoms have a much wider application than a statement of aims of the Second World War. They could be used to understand the aims of public policy in a modern state, particularly a welfare state. The first type of freedoms, such as freedom of speech and freedom of worship, symbolize the *negative* aspect of liberty. They imply a negative role of the state, that is not to restrict the individual in pursuing his self-appointed goals. The second type of freedoms, such as freedom from fear and freedom from want, refers to the *positive* aspect of liberty. They call for a positive role of the state, that is to remove certain impediments in the way of the individual in exercising his freedom. Once this basic distinction between negative and positive aspects of liberty is recognized, the actual lists of freedoms falling under each category can be suitably enlarged. It is also essential

to remember that these two types of freedom, namely *negative liberty* and *positive liberty*, are not opposed to each other. In fact, they are complementary; they are two sides of the same coin. They are incomplete without each other, although some thinkers accord primacy to one over the other.

It is also important to note that the struggle for liberty started in late seventeenth-century Europe as a prelude to the Industrial Revolution, with an emphasis on negative liberty, particularly, in the economic sphere. It was intended to pave the way for the establishment of capitalism against the prevailing forces of feudalism. As Norman P. Barry, in his *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory* (1989), has elucidated: "The negative conception of liberty...flourished at a time when individuals were struggling to be free from the unnecessary restraints of arbitrary government and when individual choice determined the allocation of resources. The main political axiom of the negative liberty doctrine was that 'everyone knows his own interest best' and that the state should not decide his ends and purposes." Champions of negative liberty not only believed in individual choice of resources and techniques, but also the choice of parties to deal with in their transactions. Thus 'freedom of contract' was recognized as an essential requirement of liberty.

Feudalism

Feudalism refers to the system of economic, political and social organization which flourished in the medieval Europe. Economically it was based on agriculture where social status of different sections of society was determined by the the land tenure. Land was held by various levels of landlords in return for homage and military service to be rendered to the King. It was tilled by serfs who were obliged to render labour services and dues to the landlords. All sections of society including clerics, soldiers, administrators and toilers were tied to each other by mutual obligations. With the advent of Industrial Revolution in the mid of the eighteenth century, it became necessary to break this system to ensure freedom of the new entrepreneurial class as well as the new working class.

Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900) asserted that a person who freely negotiated a contract, expressed his individual choice even if the terms were particularly onerous to him. The early liberals who stood for liberty in all spheres insisted that law must enforce all contracts (with some exceptions, such as in the case of contracts of slavery) since each individual was the best judge of his own interest, and he used his judgement before entering into any contract. The state was not allowed to impose its own conception of 'good' on the individuals in their mutual dealings. This idea of negative liberty led to the doctrine of *laissez-faire,* that is the freedom from government interference in economic affairs. Hence most of the advocates of negative liberty, such as Adam Smith (1723-90), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), James Mill (1773-1836), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Henry Sidgwick favoured a minimal state.

This liberal-individualist view of liberty was originally put forward by the spokesmen of the new middle class—the merchant-industrialist class which sought to establish a 'free market society' against the mercantile policies of the state. It

was argued that, in an atmosphere of non-intervention, the interaction between self-interest of different individuals would result in the promotion of social interest as a whole. The exponents of *laissez-faire* individualism saw society as an aggregate of atomized, alienated individuals, joined together by a bond of mechanical unity. Liberty was seen as the freedom of trade, freedom of enterprise, freedom of contract, a free competition of the market forces of supply and demand. The state was viewed as a negative state, a necessary evil, which was required not to interfere with the natural liberty of men, but only to maintain their liberty by protecting their person and property from the onslaught of other individuals.

Mercantile Policy

Mercantile policy refers to the policy which advocated state intervention in economy for the protection of indigenous industries to ensure import of cheap raw materials and export of expensive finished goods. These steps were thought to be necessary for enhancing national prosperity.

Free Market Society

Free market society refers to a model of society where all social relationships are reduced to market relations, that is the relations between supplier and consumer. Accordingly, all individuals (or families) are expected to ascertain each other's needs and earn their living by fulfilling them. Thus, free market society cultivates respect for each other's abilities and achievements, and encourages their dealings for mutual advantage. However, since its organization is based on the cruel forces of demand and supply, it has little room for humane considerations or a sympathetic treatment towards disadvantaged people.

The concept of negative liberty played an important historical role. It proved instrumental in the establishment of capitalist system in Europe. It released the forces of production which were blocked by the feudal system inherited from the Middle Ages. But by the middle of the nineteenth century, it became evident that the capitalist system supported by negative liberty had brought about miserable conditions for workers and consumers. The appalling disparities of wealth and power—mounting oppression, exploitation and injustice in society—amply demonstrated contradictions in this concept of liberty. Humanist writers, socialists, Marxists and positive liberals came forward to demand a new definition of liberty. They argued that the non-interventionist policy of the state, particularly in the economic sphere, was not compatible with liberty as a universal principle. The employer's freedom to hire and fire workers at his will in the face of a rapidly rising labour force in industrial cities had made a mockery of the freedom of contract; the workers were forced to live under constant insecurity and threat of unemployment, to work under uncongenial conditions, and to live a life of abject poverty at a sub-human level. The benefit of 'liberty' was now sought to be extended to the working class, largely because of the mounting pressure from the working class itself.

It was John Stuart Mill (1806-73) who introduced the conception of positive liberty and consequent transition from negative liberalism to positive liberalism. Mill started with a defence of *laissez-faire* individualism, but realizing its weaknesses in the light of the new socio-economic realities, he proceeded to modify it. Mill was the first prominent liberal thinker who realized that the working classes were being deprived of their due share in a capitalist economy based on *laissez-faire* individualism. He, therefore, sought to discover an area where state intervention could be justified. At the outset, he drew a distinction between two types of actions of men: 'self-regarding actions' whose effect was confined to the individual himself; and 'other-regarding actions' which affected others. Mill advocated complete freedom of conduct for the individual in the sphere of self-regarding actions unless he was proceeding on a self-destructive path due to ignorance. However, in the sphere of 'other-regarding actions' Mill conceded the right of the community to coerce the individual if his conduct was prejudicial to its welfare. Whether it is possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between 'self-regarding actions' and 'other-regarding actions' of the individual is beside the point. The real significance of making such a distinction lay in Mill's effort to define a sphere where an individual's behaviour could be regulated in the interests of the community. Thus, he was contemplating a positive role for the state in securing social welfare even if it implied curbing liberty of the individual to some extent. It was Mill who gave a sound theory of taxation, pleaded for the limitation of the right of inheritance, and recommended state provision of education.

After J.S. Mill, T.H. Green (1836-82), L.T. Hobhouse (1864-1929) and H.J. Laski (1893-1950) further developed the positive concept of liberty. Green postulated a theory of rights and insisted on the positive role of the state in creating conditions under which men could effectively exercise their moral freedom. Hobhouse and Laski postulated that private property was no absolute right, and that the state must secure welfare of the people—no matter if it is constrained to curtail economic liberty of the privileged few.

(*b*) THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

It is significant that political thought of the early exponents of positive liberty is associated with the theory of welfare state, which first appeared in England and then spread to other parts of the world. Positive liberty is now regarded as an essential complement of negative liberty in all modern states. However, some contemporary liberal thinkers, known as exponents of Libertarianism, have sought to lay renewed emphasis on negative liberty. Of these, Isaiah Berlin, (1909-97), F.A. Hayek (1899-1992), Milton Friedman(1912-2006) and Robert Nozick (1938-2002) are most important.

Libertarianism

Libertarianism refers to a contemporary principle of politics which seeks to remove all impediments in the way of individual's liberty as the basic principle of public policy. It rejects welfare state and treats free market society as an essential condition of liberty. It stands for minimum intervention of the State in mutual dealings of individuals.

Views of Berlin

Isaiah Berlin, in his *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958), sought to give a new turn to the distinction between negative liberty and positive liberty. According to Berlin, negative liberty of individual consists in not being prevented from attaining his goal by other human beings. On the other hand, positive liberty treats individual as his own master. In both cases liberty implies *an absence of restraint.* Political liberty belongs only to the sphere of negative liberty. In other words, the state can only secure negative liberty to the individual by ensuring that he is not prevented from choosing his course of action. On the other hand, positive liberty belongs to individual's own will and capacity which is beyond the scope of the state. If one cannot fly like an eagle or swim like a whale, one is by no means deprived of political liberty on this count. Similarly, if a man is too poor to afford something on which there is no legal ban—a loaf of bread, a journey round the world, recourse to law courts—he cannot complain that he has been deprived of political liberty. The capacity or incapacity to fulfil one's desires belongs to man himself; the state is not concerned with this sphere. Berlin has thus taken the position that the availability or non-availability of means is entirely an individual's own concern and that the state has no responsibility of making the required means available to him. Accordingly, the existing social inequalities cannot be questioned from the point of view of liberty. Berlin's position on this point is itself questionable.

On closer examination, it becomes clear that Berlin has confused the two spheres of positive liberty, namely the moral sphere and the material sphere. In the moral sphere, Berlin's conception of positive liberty is very illuminating. Norman P. Barry, in his *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory (*1989), has elucidated Berlin's view as follows: "Positive liberty...does not interpret freedom as simply being left alone but as 'self-mastery'. This theory is a special theory of the self—the personality is divided into a higher and a lower self and a person is free to the extent that his higher self, the source of his genuinely rational and long-term ends, is in command of his lower self, wherein lie his ephemeral and irrational desires. Thus, a person might be free in the sense of not being restrained by external forces but remain a slave to irrational appetites; as a drug-addict, an alcoholic or a compulsive gambler might be said to be unfree." It is obvious that in the moral sphere, a man may be deprived of his freedom due to lack of self-control, and not due to coercion by other men. The state can do little to restore freedom to the individual in this sphere.

However, when we turn to the material sphere, enjoyment of positive freedom is hampered by different reasons. Here again Berlin has confused the two types of disabilities. Just recall his illustrations: "If one cannot fly like an eagle or swim like a whale" —this disability is fundamentally different from the second one, that is "if a man is too poor to afford...a loaf of a bread, and ...recourse to law courts." In the first case, Berlin is pointing to natural limitations, something that is *unalterable.* Hence any complaint in this behalf would be untenable. In actual life, such disabilities are never sought to be overcome by political action. But in the second case, Berlin is referring to such disabilities as are the product of social arrangement that is *alterable* by political action. An urge for the removal of such

disabilities has led to several social and political movements, even revolutions, in many parts of the world. Lots of people are poor, backward and ignorant not because of their own failure, inability or negligence, but because of social injustice. The source of their plight may be traced to what may aptly be termed 'coercion by other individuals' where state intervention would be justified by Berlin's own standards. As B.C. Parekh, in his *Contemporary Political Thinkers* (1982), has significantly observed: "It is not clear what Berlin would say if an individual thought that his lack of means was the result of social arrangements, and therefore, amounted to an interference by other men." C.B. Macpherson has criticized Berlin in his *Democratic Theory—Essays in Retrieval* (1973) on similar lines: "...the division Berlin makes between negative and positive liberty will not bear the weight he puts on it, ultimately because each of the two concepts is defined in a way which neglects or understates the role of those impediments...namely lack of access to the means of life and the means of labour...his negative liberty is, for that reason, too narrowly conceived, and...it is at bottom a mechanical, inertial concept of freedom which is fully appropriate only to a complete market society." In asserting positive liberty as the desire of the individual to be his own master, to be self-directed, to be moved by his own conscious purpose, Berlin saves the individual from the authoritarian claims of the idealist theory, and thus, makes further contribution to the liberal-individualist theory. In any case, Berlin's concept of positive liberty does not correspond to positive liberalism's concept of positive liberty.

Idealist Theory of Freedom

Idealist theory of freedom was chiefly advanced by G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) which eulogizes the state as embodiment of Reason and holds that individual's freedom lies in accepting the dictates of the ideal state. This theory proves disastrous when an existing government is allowed to exercise authority of the ideal state without questioning the character of the persons who form that particular government.

The more logical distinction between negative liberty and positive liberty is one that focuses on the role of the state under different situations. According to this view, negative liberty consists in the 'absence of restraint', *i.e.* non-interference by the state in certain activities of the individual, to enable him to pursue his own happiness so long as he does not obstruct others is their similar freedom to pursue their happiness. Positive liberty, on the other hand, consists in removing the constraints faced by the individual in pursuing his happiness where he is obstructed in doing so for want of the means or capacity due to the prevailing socio-economic conditions. As S.I. Benn and R.S. Peters, in their *Social Principles and the Democratic State* (1975), have illustrated:

> If education is expensive and the parents are poor, it makes a mockery of freedom to say that one is free to educate one's children merely because their is no law or custom against it. Choice may *be formally* unlimited; there can be no freedom unless it is also *effectively* unlimited. To remove any hindrance to people doing what they want to do thus counts as an extension of freedom.

Any state regulation which seeks to reconcile the claims of liberty with opportunity, in fact, signifies the transition from negative liberty to positive liberty:

> To provide a cripple with an artificial leg, an ignorant man with education, an unemployed man with a job, all count as positive extensions of freedom. Legal compulsions are then a small price to pay for positive freedoms of this sort; for we yield a little only to receive back more. And the absolute goodness of freedom remains intact *(ibid.)*.

This view of positive liberty may be described as *humanitarian view* in contrast to the *libertarian view.* While negative liberty denotes absence of restraint so that the state shall abstain from imposing 'unreasonable' restraints on the individual, positive liberty stands for the removal of constraints which are the product of the social set-up and which are capable of being removed by making necessary changes in the social set-up. If a man is faced with the lack of capacity in the fulfilment of his desire, he will not make it a *political issue* until he is convinced that his incapacity emanates from the socio-economic conditions, and that it can be removed by making necessary changes in those conditions. If one cannot fly like an eagle or swim like a whale, one does not make it a political issue because one's incapacity in this matter is not a product of socio-economic conditions, nor can it be removed by altering the socio-economic conditions. But if one does not get a job, or adequate wages, or quality goods at a reasonable price, or essential supplies and services, or the opportunity for education, etc. one is convinced that these conditions are alterable by changes in social policy, and therefore, proceeds to demand a political solution of these problems.

To take another instance, some men are born white, some are born black. This is the outcome of some sort of natural order, not of socio-economic conditions. Men do not complain of it at the political level, nor do they demand that the black races should be converted into white, because they know that this condition is not alterable. But when society discriminates between white and black races, and denies the black certain privileges extended to the white men, the resentment by the black races is justified because this is seen as social injustice which can be set right by making necessary changes in social policy. In short, positive liberty implies the removal of only such constraints and provision of only such opportunities which can be accomplished through the alteration of socio-economic conditions. As D.D. Raphael, in his *Problems of Political Philosophy* (1976), has aptly illustrated:

> A man who is locked up in prison is not at liberty, because he is restrained by the action of other persons. And we may speak of freedom from want, or of freeing mankind from the scourge of cancer, when we mean that the impediments to which we refer, although not imposed by human action, are capable (we hope) of being removed by human action. But we should not say that a man is unfree because he is restrained by a natural impediment which cannot be removed by human action.

Views of Hayek

F.A. Hayek, in his *Constitution of Liberty* (1960), used the terms 'liberty' and

'freedom' interchangeably. He argued that *a man possesses liberty or freedom when he is not subject to coercion by the arbitrary will of another.* This is the essence of individual freedom which should not be confused with any other meaning of freedom. Hayek particularly sought to contrast individual freedom with three other meanings of freedom, namely 'political freedom', 'inner freedom' and 'freedom as power' respectively. Political freedom denotes participation of men in the choice of their government, in the process of legislation, and in the control of administration. This does not necessarily coincide with individual freedom. Thus Hayek argues that a non-democratic order may be permissive and a democratic order may be restrictive; hence, political freedom is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of freedom.

Then inner freedom denotes the extent to which a person is guided in his actions by his own considered will rather than by momentary impulse or circumstance. It stands opposed not to coercion by others but to moral weakness or the influence of passing emotions. Hence it is different from individual freedom. Finally, freedom as power signifies the power to satisfy our wishes, or the extent of the choice of alternatives open to us. There is a vital difference between non-interference with another's act and a person's effective power to act. A person may be able to do what he may not lawfully do, or unable to do what nobody is trying to prevent him from doing. Hence, freedom as power should not be confused with individual freedom.

Hayek insists on preserving the original meaning of the word 'freedom', enhancing its value by closely restricting its application. He argues that the cardinal value of liberty should not be exploited by the advocates of collectivism to justify large amounts of state intervention. If liberty is viewed as power, there is no end to the number of legislative measures which can be justified as extending the range of choice of persons, or their effective power to do whatever they may wish. The result could be the destruction of individual liberty in the name of a spurious notion of liberty. Hayek is not denying that the limited provision by government of skills and opportunities is desirable; he is only saying that *such enabling activities should not be represented as promoting freedom!*

Collectivism

Collectivism refers to a principle which holds that society should be organized on the basis of collective control of economic production and political decisions. Generally this control is to be exercised through state institutions. Collectivism is directly opposed to individualism. It is closely related to various forms of socialism, communism and syndicalism, etc.

In short, Hayek identifies freedom as 'freedom from constraints of the state' in the tradition of James Madison (1751-1836), Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59) and Lord Acton (1834-1902). Hayek defines and defends liberalism as a doctrine which emphasizes the minimization of coercive powers of government. He argues that the state should positively promote competition, and should undertake non-coercive service functions, as the market mechanism does not provide for all needs. *The state* should ensure minimum income to each individual or family, but

should not make market itself an instrument of distributive justice! Dwelling on the antithesis between liberty and equality, Hayek argues that individuals differ greatly in their skills and abilities and this natural tendency towards inequality can be countered only by the authoritarian suppression of individual talents and aspirations. Thus he observes :

> From the fact that people are very different it follows that, if we treat them equally, the result must be inequality in their actual position, and that the only way to place them in an equal position would be to treat them differently...The equality before the law which freedom requires leads to material inequality... The desire of making people more alike in their condition cannot be accepted in a free society as a justification for further and discriminatory coercion (*The Constitution of Liberty*; 1960).

In a nutshell, Hayek's argument against equality is based on two premises. In the first place, he assumes that liberty consists in 'absence of coercion' in the sphere of individual activity by other individuals or the state. Secondly, he observes that individuals differ in their talents and skills and their equality before the law (in consonance with the principle of liberty) is bound to create inequality in their actual position in terms of their material status. Hence, any attempt to create material equality among different individuals is bound to involve 'coercion' which would deprive them of their freedom.

> One cannot help a country to maintain its standard of life by assisting people to consume more than they produce.
>
> F.A. Hayek (1976)

Hayek's concern for freedom is so profound that he even tends to ignore the claim of 'equal freedom' for all individuals. He recognizes the value of individual freedom not so much from the standpoint of the individual as from that of society. For Hayek, acquisition and use of new knowledge is the key to social progress. An individual makes his contribution to progress through the cumulative growth of knowledge: "If there were omniscient men...there would be little case for liberty... Liberty is essential in order to leave room for the unforeseeable and unpredictable" *(ibid.).* The larger the sum total of human knowledge, the smaller the share each individual can absorb. Nobody is competent enough to pronounce a final word about human affairs. Submission to another's will is, therefore, disastrous. The value of any particular freedom is not to be judged by counting heads. The importance of freedom to do a particular thing has nothing to do with the number of people who want to do it. It is quite possible that the freedoms vital to social progress may not be widely sought. *Hayek,* therefore, *asserts that it is better that some should be free than none and better that many should have full freedom than that all should have a limited freedom!* Thus according to Hayek, the 'cake' of freedom is not to be divided on the basis of 'equal shares for all', but on the basis of each individual's contribution to progress. Since each individual has unknown potential of making contribution to progress, it is difficult to ascertain each individual's entitlement to different amounts of freedom! *Hayek's conclusions are not consistent with his own assumptions.* He begins with taking individual as an end and ends up by reducing

him to a means!

Views of Friedman

Milton Friedman, in his *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), sought to identify capitalism or a competitive market society as a necessary condition of freedom, which implies repudiation of equality for the sake of maintaining freedom. He defines freedom as 'the absence of coercion of a man by his fellow men', and argues that freedom of the individual, or perhaps of the family is the liberal's ultimate goal in judging social arrangements. He suggests that 'a free private enterprise exchange economy' or 'competitive capitalism' is both a direct component of freedom, and a necessary though not a sufficient condition of political freedom. Friedman's contempt for equality is inherent in his very concept of freedom. He argues that in order to maximize this freedom, governments should be allowed to handle only those matters which cannot be handled through the market at all, or can be handled only at so great a cost that the use of political channels may be preferable. Accordingly, government is required only to sustain and supplement the market society and nothing beyond that. As Macpherson has elucidated : "This would mean government moving out of almost all its welfare and regulatory functions. Controls on, or support of, any prices, wages, interest rates, rents, exports, imports, and amounts produced, would all have to go; so would present social security programmes, housing subsidy programmes, and the like" *(Democratic Theory — Essays in Retrieval*; 1973).

> A society that puts equality—in the sense of equality of outcome—ahead of freedom, will end up with neither equality nor freedom.
>
> Milton Friedman

Macpherson has rightly pointed out that Friedman's view of the capitalist market economy—that it can co-ordinate economic activities without coercion—rests on an elementary conceptual error. Friedman fails to distinguish between simple exchange economy and capitalist economy—the latter being characterized by the separation of labour and capital. In a capitalist economy labour force exists without its own sufficient capital, hence it has no choice in the market. Man needs creative freedom to put his labour into creative channels; he cannot remain idle like an animal or a machine, Capitalism obstructs his attempt to employ his labour creatively with a free choice as he is coerced by the market forces beyond his control. The only possibility of mitigation of this coercion lies in a regulatory welfare state which is opposed by Friedman. Hence, Friedman's concept of freedom is ill-conceived and partial.

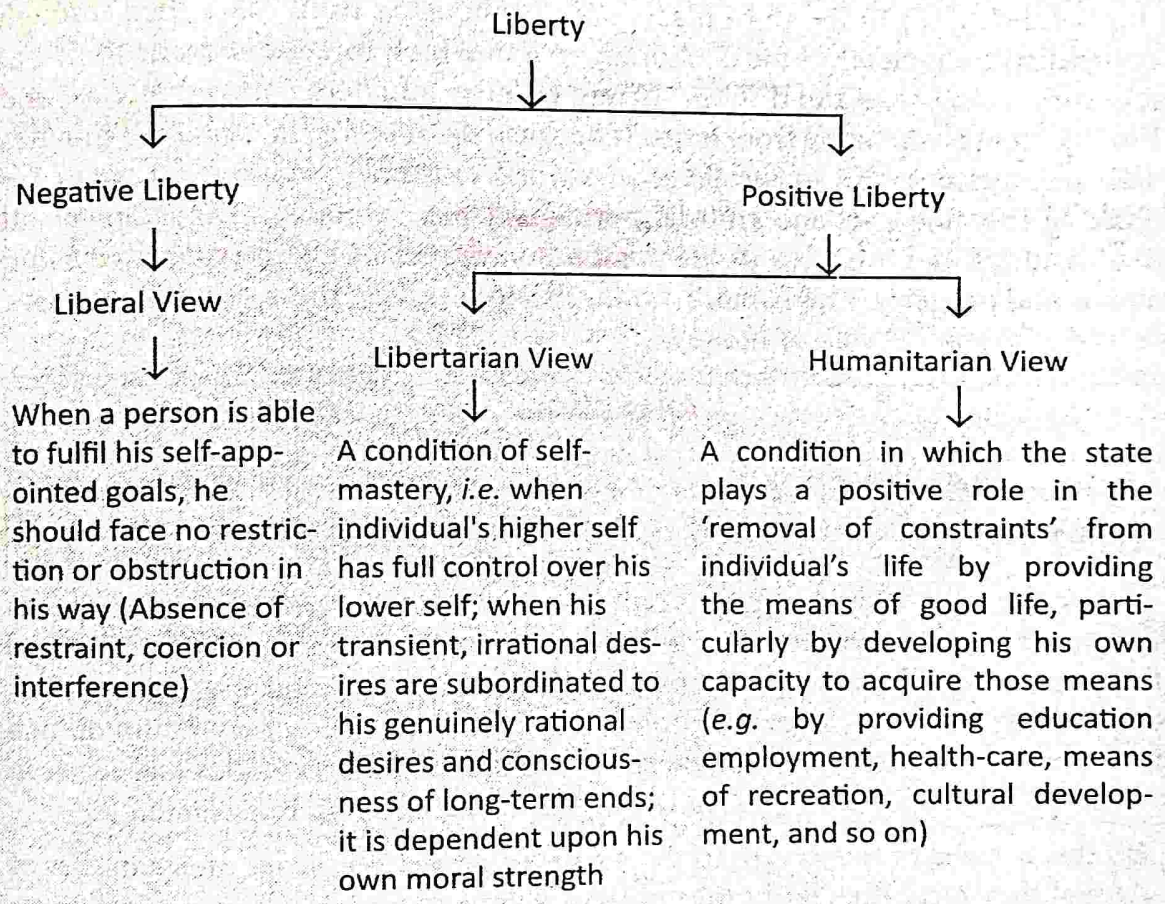
Views of Nozick

Robert Nozick is another prominent liberal who seeks to oppose the principle of equality in strong terms. In his *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), Nozick tries to determine functions of the state on the basis of his theory of origin of the state. Following Locke's method, Nozick asserts that individuals have certain rights in the state of nature. They would hire protective associations for their property holdings. The dominant protective association would become the 'state'. Nozick

maintains that the acquisition or transfer of property without force or fraud is just, but not otherwise. Rights are the product of voluntary exchanges. The state comes into existence for the performance of limited functions, particularly for the maintenance of property rights of the individuals. This leads to legitimacy of a minimal state which does not engage in redistributive transfers among citizens who were originally its clients. Inequalities at the level of production should not be sought to be rectified at the level of distribution.

However, if there is only one source of water in a desert, nobody should be allowed to monopolize it. But this restriction should not apply to the products of human effort and talents. Thus, he who discovers the remedy of a fatal disease is entitled to demand any price for it. In this way Nozick assumes that all inequalities of wealth and power are the product of individual differences in talents and efforts and that it would not be just to remove or reduce these inequalities by redistributive transfers. This is the familiar argument of those liberal-individualists who tend to ignore the role of differences in social conditions in the differential outputs of different individuals. This view does not correspond to the realities of the capitalist system and is, therefore, ill-founded.

Distinction Between Negative and Positive Liberty


Liberty
Negative Liberty
Positive Liberty
Liberal View
Libertarian View
Humanitarian View
When a person is able to fulfil his self-appointed goals, he should face no restriction or obstruction in his way (Absence of restraint, coercion or interference)
A condition of self-mastery, *i.e.* when individual's higher self has full control over his lower self; when his transient, irrational desires are subordinated to his genuinely rational desires and consciousness of long-term ends; it is dependent upon his own moral strength
A condition in which the state plays a positive role in the 'removal of constraints' from individual's life by providing the means of good life, particularly by developing his own capacity to acquire those means (*e.g.* by providing education employment, health-care, means of recreation, cultural development, and so on)

(Libertarians believe that the state can secure only negative liberty of the individual; acquisition of positive liberty is his own concern. On the other hand, moralists or humanitarians expect the state to secure positive liberty of the individual through its various welfare programmes.)

V
MARXIST CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

HUMANIST BASIS OF FREEDOM

Marx, in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844)—which were discovered and published as late as 1932—laid down the ethical basis of socialism and humanist foundations of freedom. He severely criticized the capitalist system for its dehumanizing effect. Marx demonstrated that the capitalist system deformed the productive activity of man and caused his alienation in several ways. Accordingly, the alienation of man in contemporary society was an outcome of the system of commodity production, division of labour, private ownership, market economy, monetization of exchange and similar features of the capitalist system. Marx identified four levels of alienation: (*a*) In the first place, man is alienated from his own product and from his work process, because the worker plays no part is deciding what to produce and how to produce; (*b*) Secondly, man is alienated from nature—his work does not give him a sense of satisfaction as a creative worker; under mechanization, the work tends to become increasingly routinized and monotonous; (*c*) In the third place, man is alienated from other men through the competitive character of the economic system which forces everyone to live at someone else's expense and divides society into irreconcilable class interests; and (*d*) Finally, man is alienated from himself because the *realm of necessity* dominates his life and reduces him to the level of animal existence, leaving no room for the taste of literature, art and cultural heritage. Thus, capitalism subordinates all human faculties and qualities to the conditions created by the private ownership of capital and property. The capitalist himself, no less than the worker, becomes a slave to the tyrannical rule of money.

Alienation

Alienation refers to a state of mind in which individual is isolated from the significant aspects of his social existence or from the creative aspects of his own personality.

Deliverance from this bondage is only to be found in the realization that society is a creation by which man attains a fuller measure of freedom, which is obstructed by the peculiar conditions created by the private property, and these conditions exist in their worst form under the capitalist system. Its remedy may be found in a socialist revolution which will enable society to restore human values and usher in a new era of freedom. As Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring* (1878), has elucidated:

> By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialized character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialized production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of

the state dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organization, becomes at the same time the lord over nature, his own master—free.

Proletariat

Under capitalist system, proletariat refers to the class of wage-labourers who do not own the means of production. They are forced to sell their labour power in the market in order to earn their living. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) had ample faith in the revolutionary potential of this class.

In short, while the liberal-individualist theory of freedom concedes that freedom of man can be secured with minor adjustments within the capitalist system, Marxist theory calls for overthrow of the capitalist system itself in order to secure the conditions of freedom.

MARCUSE'S CONCEPT OF ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN

Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), who claimed to be a Marxist, gave a brilliant analysis of the problem of freedom in contemporary Western society. Orthodox Marxists as well as anti-Marxists have been insisting on a scientific and economic interpretation of Marxism. In contrast, Marcuse, like many other neo-Marxists, underlined the subjective, critical and humanist dimension of Marxism. He rejected Soviet Marxism as a distorted version of Marxism and sought to revive the original, humanist interpretation of Marxism as a tool of analysis as well as an instrument of social change.

In his *One-Dimensional Man : Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964), Marcuse dwelled on the theme of alienation in contemporary Western society. He gave a penetrating critique of capitalism as regards its impact on human freedom. Marcuse argued that in the contemporary society, capitalism exercises monopolistic control not only on production and distribution, it also creates the desire and demand for commodities through a clever manipulation of the mass media. The result is the widespread craze for consumer goods which develops into a distorted second nature of man. Consumer capitalism renders the oppressed sections insensitive to their original discontent, by stimulating their trivial, material desires which can be easily satisfied. Under the spell of gratification of these trivial desires, the genuine urge for freedom disappears. Against this background, the alienated human beings become unaware of their alienation. Under the circumstances, they should first be awakened to realize their condition of alienation in order to arouse their urge for freedom.

In *Eros and Civilization* (1966), Marcuse has given a blueprint of society where alienation will be removed and freedom will be restored. It will be a democratic community where work will become play, and necessary labour will be organized in harmony with liberated, and authentic, individual needs. Discontinuance of repressive performance will eliminate surplus repression, thus freeing the person from alienated labour. Marcuse concludes with an optimistic note that the Western society has already evolved a technology which is geared to meet most of the human needs. It is sufficient to enable men to live in freedom and dignity. Once

they understand the necessary conditions of freedom, they can transcend the era of violence and anarchy and build a new society where freedom will reign supreme.

Marcuse's view concerning the possibility of happiness has been criticized on many grounds. Some critics believe that human needs are endless; gap between aspiration and achievement will never allow human beings to attain happiness. Then who would bring about revolution? Marcuse has no faith in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. He pins his hopes on the marginal *elite* of the unbrainwashed students and radically dispossessed members of the poorest classes. Some critics argue that after denying the revolutionary potential of the proletariat Marcuse loses his claim to be called a Marxist!

VI
GANDHIAN VIEW OF FREEDOM

CONCEPT OF *SWARAJ*

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher, conceived the idea of freedom in terms of *Swaraj*. Gandhi was a stalwart of India's freedom movement, that is the movement seeking India's freedom from British colonial rule. At the same time, as a moralist, Gandhi also insisted on moral regeneration of individual as well as nation. Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj* confirms his firm commitment to moral individualism. The term '*Swaraj*' literally means 'self-rule', 'self-government', 'self-determination' or 'independence'. Gandhi sought to expand its meaning and scope.

Moral Individualism

Moral individualism refers to a philosophical principle which regards individual as an end-in-itself, endowed with 'dignity'. Accordingly, no human being can be treated as a means to serve an end which lies beyond his conscious existence; no worldly thing can be treated as more valuable than a human being; and no human being can accept an obligation except at his own free will.

Gandhi argued that *Swaraj* did not simply mean political independence from the foreign rule; it also implied the idea of cultural and moral independence. If a country is politically independent but culturally dependent on others for choosing its course of action, it would be devoid of *Swaraj*. *Swaraj* does not close the doors of learning from others, but it requires confidence in one's own potential and decisions. Gandhi thought of *Swaraj* as a system in which all people will have a natural affinity with their country and they will readily collaborate in the task of nation-building.

> I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

For Gandhi, the idea of *Swaraj* was not confined to the political goal of securing independence from foreign yoke. It also implied the moral regeneration of the individual himself—the process of 'self-control', 'self-discipline' and 'self-purification' which must continue even after the independence. As Gandhi himself observed:

> I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange 'king log for king stork'. Hence for me the movement of *swaraj* is a movement of self-purification (*Selections from Gandhi by* Nirmal Kumar Bose; 1948)

Gandhi sought to demonstrate that individual self-government, *i.e.* self-control or self-mastery, was as important as political self-government itself. Thus he wrote in his biography *(My Experiments With Truth*; 1929):

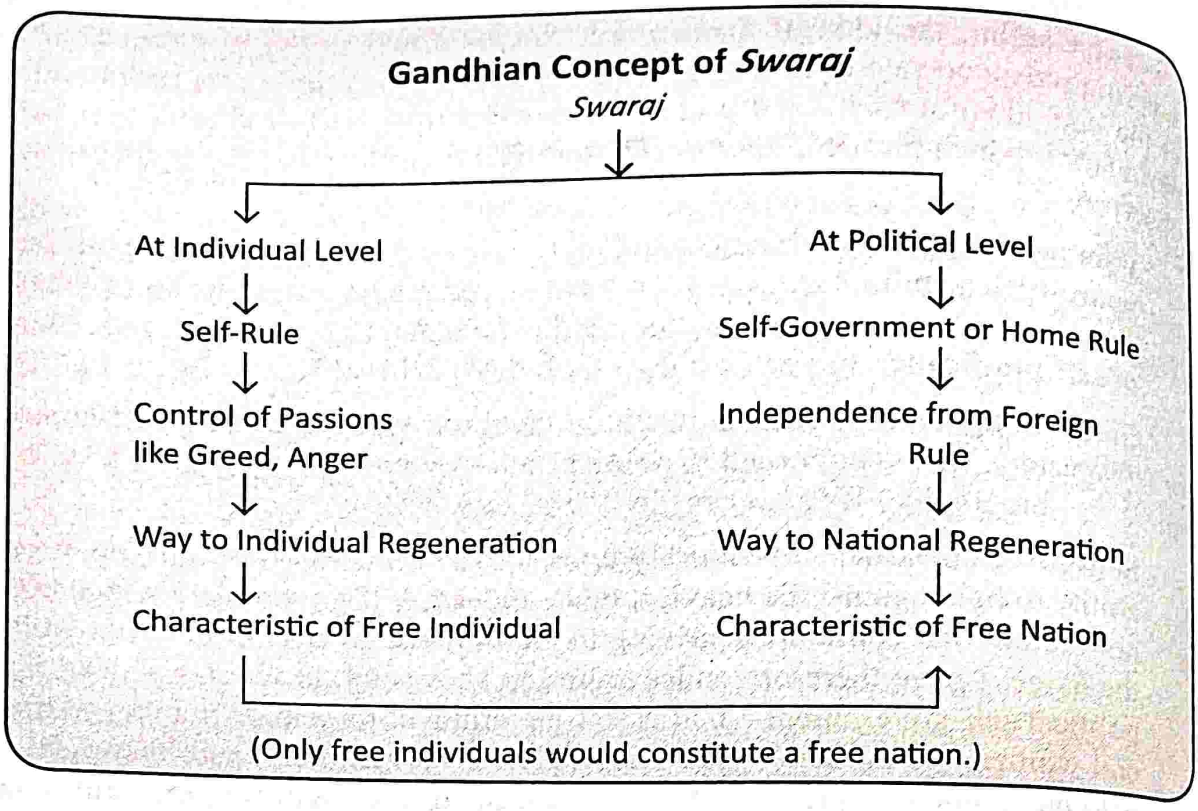
> Self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it, is not worth the name. I have therefore endeavoured to show both in word and deed that political self-government—that is sell-government for a large number of men and women—is no better than individual self-government, and, therefore, it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule.

As a votary of purity of means as well as ends, Gandhi tries to assert that we must rely on non-violence or *Ahimsa* for the attainment of political self-government as well as individual self-government.

> *Ahimsa* : A term of Indian origin which literally means non-violence or non-injury. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher, conceived *Ahimsa* as a means of self-purification and a moral weapon for fighting against injustice in various spheres, including politics. He argued that *Ahimsa* is not the resort of the weak, but the power of the strong—of course his moral power derived from adherence to truth. When one fights for a just cause and shows firm faith in truth, it results in the 'change of heart' of the mighty opponent and makes him bend. *Ahimsa* embodies the art of gaining victory over physical force by spiritual force.

Now according to Gandhi, *a free nation can be constituted only by free individuals*, that is the individuals who practise *Swaraj* in their individual conduct. He held that *swaraj* at national level can be maintained only by those who are devoted to building a self-regulated nation, and not by selfish and immoral people wedded to retrograde customs and superstitions. Freedom from foreign rule was a necessary but not a sufficient condition of real *Swaraj* at the national level. Only self-desciplined people will be capable of exercising their control over the powers that be. As Gandhi himself observed in *Young India* (1925):

> Real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *Swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.



VII
FREEDOM AS DEVELOPMENT

The idea of freedom as development is opposed to the libertarian view of freedom which conceives freedom as 'absence of restraint' or as 'being left alone'. The libertarian view is designed to benefit those fortunate people (the rich and the strong) who are placed in an advantageous position in a competitive situation. This interpretation of freedom does not favour the unfortunate lot (the poor or the weaker) who might be left to suffer in such a situation. On the contrary, the idea of 'freedom as development' contemplates a situation in which the disadvantaged sections of society would be able to improve the quality of their life by means of their talents and efforts. This view does not invoke mercy of the rich towards the poor; it seeks to protect everybody's dignity and self-esteem while pursuing the course of self-development. The idea of freedom as development finds adequate expression in the philosophy of two prominent social thinkers: C.B. Macpberson and Amartya Sen.

MACPHERSON'S CONCEPT OF CREATIVE FREEDOM

C.B. Macpherson (1911-87), Canadian political philosopher, does not claim to be a Marxist. Yet he is one of the acute critics of capitalism. Norman Barry (*An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*; 1989) calls him a neo-Marxist. In his celebrated work *Democratic Theory — Essays in Retrieval* (1973), Macpherson argues that Western democratic theory is characterized by two basic principles: (*a*) Maximization of utilities; and (*b*) Maximization of powers. Under the first principle,

man is recognized as a consumer of utilities, that is essentially as a bundle of appetites demanding satisfaction from society. The second principle is derived from J.S. Mill's revision of orthodox utilitarianism. It is an ethical principle which treats man as a *doer* and *creator*, demanding development and application of his uniquely human capacities. Essence of freedom lies in fully realizing his creative faculties. Real freedom can be exercised through *developmental power*, as distinguished from *extractive power*. This may be termed as 'moralist view' of power. In short, while utilitarian view seeks fulfilment through maximization of extractive powers of the individual, moralist view requires maximization of his developmental powers.

Making a distinction between the two components of power, Macpherson observes: Extractive power represents the familiar concept of power, *viz.* a person's ability to use others' capacities to serve his own propose, that is 'power over' others. It implies the ability to extract benefits from others. It is interesting to note that the Western tradition of political thought from Machiavelli (1469-1527) to James Mill (1773-1836) has broadly focused on this concept of power. This attitude was not a product of intellectual carelessness but it was a factual description of power relations in a market society.

Developmental power, on the other hand, denotes a person's ability to use his own capacities for the fulfilment of his self-appointed goals. The use of extractive power in the modern society is exemplified by the power of owners of land and capital. By virtue of this ownership they can buy and use the manual and intellectual capacities of others for their own benefit. The workers and ordinary people who do not own land and capital or other means of production would be benefited only if they win developmental power for themselves.

It is important to note that Macpherson not only introduced the concept of developmental power, he also paid special attention to elaborate it. Thus, developmental power of a person enables him to develop his truly human capacities. Some examples of such capacities are: capacity for rational understanding, for moral judgement and action, for aesthetic or artistic activity, for love and friendship and, of course, the capacity for materially productive labour. The concept of developmental power treats a person as a *doer* and *creator*. It requires that he should not face any impediments or constraints while using his human capacities to achieve his objectives.

Macpherson enumerates three impediments to the maximization of a person's developmental power: (*a*) Lack of adequate means of life; (*b*) Lack of access to the means of labour; and (*c*) Lack of protection against invasion by others. The problems created by the scarcity of the means of life and the scarcity of the means of labour are technological and material as well as cultural and ideological. Macpherson is quite convinced that these problems cannot be resolved within the framework of a market society based on capitalist social relations. He suggests that the solution to these problems can be found in a new system which would combine the protection of civil liberties with the goal of socialism. Only then individual would be able to make full use of his developmental power and thereby achieve his 'creative freedom'.

Socialism

As a principle of politics, socialism favours social ownership and control of the means of social production so that all able-bodied persons could be suitably employed in productive work, and all means of social production could be deployed for the fulfilment of social needs.

Macpherson on the Genesis of Creative Freedom

The Issue	*Utilitarian View*	*Moralist View*
Concept of Human Nature	As a Consumer	As a *Doer* and *Creator*
Goal of Human Life	Maximization of Utilities	Maximization of powers
Requisite Type of Power	Extractive Power	Development Power
Consequence of the Use of Power	Satisfaction of Material Wants	Creative Freedom

Macpherson argued that in the capitalist market society, developmental power of the poor sections is negligible; their extractive power is nil. On the contrary, the owners of land and capital wield immense power to exploit the manual and intellectual power of the non-owners. In other words, the poor who are constrained to sell their capabilities according to the needs of the market, have little opportunity for maximization of their developmental power. Their developmental power—which is the key to one's creative freedom—is continuously eroded in such a society. Macpherson concludes: "It is in the welfare-state variety of capitalism ... that there is a certain amount of checking of economic power by the political power" (*Democratic Theory—Essays in Retrieval*; 1973).

AMARTYA SEN'S CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED FREEDOM

Amartya Sen, contemporary Indian economist and social philosopher, has made significant contribution in the field of welfare economics. Initially, Sen (*Quality of Life*, edited by Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen; 1993) sought to promote 'capabilities approach' to champion the cause of everybody's share in the process and fruits of development. This approach insists on allocation of various goods and other benefits according to differential human capabilities of its beneficiaries. For example, here disabled persons (like physically challenged, visually challenged or otherwise handicapped persons) are redefined as 'differently abled' persons. An attempt is made to identify the residual abilities of each person and their value in enriching the social life. Now each person is given adequate additional resources to enable him or her to develop those capabilities so that he or she is able to lead a respectable social life, and to attain a common level of welfare. The impact of this approach is reflected in the United Nations Development Programme which adopted certain 'Capability Indicators' at the instance of Amartya Sen. However, critics of 'capabilities approach' seem to argue that identification of such capabilities is sometimes rooted in the cultural bias of its adherents. For example, they may

tend to replace the model of 'simple living and high thinking' by the life-style of 'consumer culture'. In any case, this flaw can be overcome by associating culturally enlightened scholars from diverse backgrounds in the process of identification of socially valuable capabilities. Possibility of this flaw does not warrant that the 'capabilities approach' should be abandoned altogether.

Subsequently, Amartya Sen (*Development as Freedom*; 2000) sought to focus on the close interlinkages between the ideals of freedom and development. Drawing our attention to the value of freedom, Sen quoted eighteenth-century poet William Cowper who observed:

Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves however contented, never know.

Sen laments that in the contemporary world of unprecedented opulence, millions of people living in rich as well as poor countries are still unfree. It is true that the twentieth century has established democratic and participatory governance as the pre-eminent model of political organization. Ideals of human rights and political liberty are now universally accepted. People live much longer, on an average than ever before. Different regions of the globe are now closely linked; this was never possible in the past. This has happened not only in the fields of trade, commerce and communication, but the interaction between ideas and ideals is also spreading all over the globe.

However, a vast section of humanity all over the world is still deprived of enlightenment as well as prosperity. Technically these people are not slaves, yet they are denied elementary freedom and remain imprisoned in one way or another by economic poverty, social deprivation, political tyranny or cultural authoritarianism. Incidentally, Sen refers to many new as well as old problems which have plagued the contemporary world. These include persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests of women and their immense potential to contribute to the social good, the worsening threat to our environment which is endangering the sustainability of our economic and social lives. Many of these deprivations, in one form or the other, are visible in rich as well as poor countries.

The main purpose of development is to extend the benefit of freedom and to spread its 'thousand charms' to the unfree citizens. Sen persuasively argues that freedom is the ultimate goal of social and economic arrangements, and the most efficient means of realizing general welfare. Sen concedes that social institutions like markets, political parties, legislatures, the judiciary and the media contribute to development by enhancing individual freedom; these are in turn sustained by social values. In this way, Sen attempts to link values, institutions, development and freedom in an elegant analytical framework. In his view, the possibility of individual's freedom depends on a positive answer to the following question: "What is the relation between our collective economic wealth and our ability to live as we would like?"

This approach views the expansion of freedom as the primary end as well

as the principal means of development. Development in this sense refers to the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their potential combined with their faculty of reason. We must distinguish between two important aspects of human freedom: (*a*) Freedom as the pre-eminent objective of development; and (*b*) Effectiveness of particular kinds of freedom to promote other kinds of freedoms. For example, there is a strong evidence that economic and political freedoms help to reinforce one another. It is wrong to consider them as hostile to each other. Similarly, social opportunities of education and health-care, which may require public action, complement individual opportunities of economic and political participation; they also help to foster our own initiative in overcoming our respective deprivations.

Critics point out that in ultimate analysis, Sen confines himself to the economic criterion as the sole measure of individual's well-being as well as freedom. However, it should not be forgotten that apart from economic poverty, Sen emphatically refers to social deprivation, political tyranny and cultural authoritarianism as potent impediments to individual's freedom. Hence in Sen's view, political and cultural factors, apart form economic factor, comprise significant criteria of freedom. In short, Sen equates freedom with 'social justice' in the broader sense, as applicable to social, political, cultural as well as economic spheres of individual's life, and also as applicable in national as well as international spheres.

Social Deprivation

Social deprivation refers to the condition in which a particular social unit (such as a class, caste, creed, race, gender or otherwise identifiable group) is deprived of a respectable status irrespective of its merit, effort or the value of its contribution to the social good. For example, in the Indian caste system, lowest castes were the victims of social deprivation; women all over the world have been denied their due place in the social system; black and other coloured people have been deprived of equal rights in many countries of the world. Social deprivation presents a glaring example of social injustice.

Political Tyranny

Political tyranny refers to a situation in which state machinery is widely used to create oppressive conditions for the people. Broadly speaking, state machinery includes legislative, executive and judicial organs of the state. Hence under political tyranny laws are largely unfair and arbitrary, police and bureaucracy tend to disgrace and terrify the people to get their commands obeyed, and courts are seldom prepared to give relief to the oppressed.

Cultural Authoritarianism

In a multicultural society, cultural authoritarianism refers to the tendency of the dominant cultural group to project its culture as the most virtuous, dignified and prestigious, with a view to persuading other cultural groups to despise their own culture and emulate the ways of the dominant culture.

The true wealth of a nation consists not in the stored-up gold but in the intellectual and physical strength of its people.

C.V. Raman (Indian Scientist)

CONCLUSION

As we proceed to analyse the problem of liberty or freedom in various contexts, its complexity is gradually revealed to us. At the outset, when liberty is defined as the 'absence of restraint', it seems to be a simple matter. This was the earliest definition put forward by the classical liberalism. According to this view, the state may impose certain restraints on the individual only in order to maintain public order and security and to ensure enforcement of contracts. Liberty is seen as an area where the state has no interference. It is argued that in order to allow maximum liberty to the individual, the state should restrict itself to minimum functions which are most essential. Market forces (like 'invisible hand to the market'—Adam Smith's pharse) are seen as the natural regulatory mechanism for the mutual adjustment of civilized individuals who generally know and abide by the rules of the game. This was precisely the view upheld by *laissez-faire* individualism.

But subsequently, it was realized that market is not a smooth and humane agency for the adjustment of human relations, that the individual is not deprived of his freedom only because of the restraints imposed by the state, but he suffers from a large number of constraints including those emanating from the vagaries of blind market forces. A welfare state with a vast network of regulations was, therefore, seen as a necessary instrument of freedom.

In due course, more and more direct or indirect, apparent or subtle sources of constraint, coercion and domination were detected by different thinkers and schools of thought which curtailed freedom of the individual at different levels. It was realized that in many cases the state could practically do nothing in tackling these sources of constraint. Marxists saw the state itself as an instrument of the 'dominant class' and envisaged 'withering away of the state' as the way to human freedom and emancipation. Libertarians, like Berlin, contended that the state could guarantee 'negative liberty' alone; that the individual himself was responsible for winning or losing his 'positive freedom'. On the other hand, neo-Marxist thinkers, like Marcuse, held that necessary means of freedom were already available in contemporary Western society; that the individual was deprived of his freedom as he became a slave to technology and consumer capitalism; that a genuine urge for emancipation will go a long way in establishing a new social order where freedom will reign supreme.

In a nutshell, the quest for freedom is a continuous process. Although freedom is sought for the individual, yet it cannot be enjoyed by the individual in isolation. Genuine freedom—or maximum possible freedom—can be attained only in a congenial social order where (on the lines of Marx's phraseology) 'free development of each will be the condition for free development of all'.

Q 1. Write a short essay on the nature and significance of freedom in political philosophy.

2. Define liberty. Distinguish between negative liberty and positive liberty against the background of the contemporary debate.

3. Write short, critical notes on : (*a*) Liberty and authority; (*b*) Civil liberty; and (*c*) Marxist view of freedom.

4. Elucidate Gandhian concept of freedom with reference to his idea of *Swaraj*.

5. Critically examine the concept of development-oriented freedom as enunciated by Amartya Sen.

7

Concept of Equality

I
MEANING OF EQUALITY

The problem of equality and inequality figured in political philosophy since earliest times. Aristotle, for instance, discovered that 'inequality' was the cause of rebellion in many a state. He defined justice as treating equals equally and unequals unequally. This was a typical statement in that it insisted on recognition and maintenance of the existing inequalities in society—between master and slave, between rich and poor, between morally superior and morally inferior, and so on. The modern idea of equality, on the contrary, tends to question those inequalities which are not based on rational grounds.

Why and how far should we demand equality in social life today? Are human beings inherently equal, and are all existing inequalities unjust? Would it be fair to allow some inequalities to continue in social life? If so, on what grounds? What would be the consequences if we try to 'equalize' everyone? All these questions prompt us to undertake a deeper analysis of the principle of equality. Broadly speaking, this principle may be considered at two levels: (*a*) Foundational equality; and (*b*) Distributive equality.

FOUNDATIONAL EQUALITY

This aspect of equality deals with the grounds on which the demand of equality should be founded. What is the logic behind our claim to human equality? For instance, we postulate that man *as such* is a rational being; he is endowed with the faculty of 'reason'; all men are created equal by God. In this sense, the idea of equality was originally expressed in the sphere of religion. But now we tend to advance other reasons also. For instance, we argue that the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of all men are similar, hence all are *entitled* to equal rights. We do not say that all men are equal in their physical or mental capacities, beauty and talents, etc. Sometimes we dwell on physical attributes to press our claim, such as when we argue that men may differ in the colour of their skin, but they

are all similar in the colour of their blood, hence they should be treated equally. Nature has not made different persons with different elements. A drug does not discriminate between the Jew and the Gentile while showing its effect. Blood group of the black may match with that of the white whereas it may not match in the case of two whites or blacks. The black may donate his eye or kidney to the white to restore his lost vision or to give him a new lease of life. In short, the distinction between different races is not ordained by nature. Thus we tend to establish some fundamental equality among men—equality as a fact—to press their claim of equality as a right.

Sometimes it is argued that the idea of equality does not derive its support from nature, as the idea of liberty does, hence it is not based on reason. For instance, it is stated that nature has created all things unequal, right from the sun and the moon, sky and earth, mountains and oceans, plants and trees, birds and animals to men and women, older and younger, stronger and weaker, wiser and stupid, and so on. Hence the principle of equality nowhere holds good. Why should it be imposed against the scheme of the nature itself? Such arguments come in very handy to those who wish to preserve their privileged position. They are quite apprehensive of the idea of equality because they believe that liberty enables men to acquire unlimited wealth, prestige and power while equality seeks to diminish their achievements. They even try to demonstrate that any measure to limit their liberty, in the interest of equality, will rob society of its valuable assets, and that the idea of equality should be thoroughly abandoned in the interest of society!

This line of argument is, however, based on a distorted concept of liberty. Freedom in society can serve as a valid rule only when it is interpreted as 'equal freedom' of all, not otherwise. Absolute liberty will only result in the liberty of the strong and the clever to oppress the weak and the simple. If liberty is not to degenerate into licence, it must be qualified by equality. In other words, I can enjoy my freedom only to the extent that it does not infringe on the similar and equal freedom of others.

Accordingly, the introduction of equality is not intended to dilute the content of liberty but to make it more relevant and substantive. If the principle of equality is invoked to prevent some section of society from acquiring unlimited wealth, prestige, and power, it is only intended to restrict the element of 'exploitation' so that other sections of society are not deprived of their due share in these advantages. Equality aims at widening the base of social benefits lest these benefits are cornered by a small and vocal minority impoverishing the rest of the community.

It is, therefore, evident that liberty and equality, as human rights, do not emanate from very different sources. On the contrary, they are based on the same logic, and they are intended to serve the same social purpose.

DISTRIBUTIVE EQUALITY

Once we have resolved the dilemma of foundational equality, we have found some justification to introduce equality at the stage of distribution. It does not warrant complete equality at the level of distribution of benefits of social life, but only suggests the correction of unjust inequalities in society. Large inequalities of

wealth, prestige and power have always remained a prominent and almost universal feature of social structure throughout human history. But as Tom Bottomore, in his *Classes in Modern Society* (1965), has demonstrated:

> During the greater part of human history this inequality among men has been generally accepted as an unalterable fact. Ancient and medieval writers, when they touch upon the subject of the social hierarchy, always tended to provide a rationalization and justification of the established order, very often in terms of a religious doctrine concerning the origin of social ranks... Only in modern times and particularly since the American and French Revolutions, has social class, as a stark embodiment of the principle of inequality, become an object of scientific study, and at the same time of widespread condemnation in terms of new social doctrines.

In other words, traditional thinkers took the phenomenon of social inequality as something divinely ordained. They sought to demonstrate that man could lead an ideal life according to his predetermined status. This mode of thought was quite natural to slave-owning society, feudal society and caste-based society which were not used to scientific reasoning. They took social order, like natural order, as something not capable of change by human design or effort.

However, with the dawn of the scientific age in the mid of the sixteenth century when men learned to control natural phenomena by rational and empirical knowledge of nature, they were also inclined to evolve rational knowledge of social structures. Many a thinker sought to discover the real foundations of social inequalities, and subjected them to a rational analysis. In other words, social thinkers of the modern age were led to inquire: (*a*) How far the existing inequalities in society were the product of the social arrangement and, could therefore be altered by making corresponding changes in the social structure; and (*b*) How far those social inequalities, which were thus alterable, could be upheld by reason. The main thrust of this line of thinking was to pave the way for removing such social inequalities as were not 'reasonable', and which were also 'removable' by human effort.

Scientific thinking about the social structure led to the demand for social change. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755), drew an important distinction between the two types of inequalities found in social life: *natural* inequality and *conventional* inequality. Natural or physical inequality, as a statement of fact, consists in the differences of age, health, bodily strength and qualities of mind and soul. Conventional inequality, on the other hand, consists in the different privileges that some men enjoy to the exclusion of others, such as inequalities of wealth, prestige and power. It follows that one form of inequality is not dependent upon human choice, being more or less ordained by nature. The other form of inequality is largely man-made; it emanates from the social order more or less deliberately designed by men themselves. Recognition of conventional inequality provides for ample scope to review the basis of social distinctions and to restructure social relations according to new concepts of social justice. Thus, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789), which was inspired by Rousseau's revolutionary ideas, affirmed: "Men are born

and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be based only upon public utility."

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

It is significant that with the advance of scientific knowledge and technology, more and more areas of natural inequality are coming within the 'alterable' sphere. We know that health and bodily strength can be considerably improved by proper nutrition, and mental make-up can be considerably developed by proper education and training. Even physical deformities and mental handicaps can be prevented by timely care, protection and treatment, so much so that an individual's appearance is amenable to plastic surgery and the skill of the beautician! The availability of these benefits to any individual is again dependent on his socio-economic status and the technological development of the society in which he lives. It is becoming increasingly clear that a large part of humanity is being deprived of the benefits of modern civilization largely because of the prevailing social distinctions and inequalities, not because of some divinely ordained system.

Thus the demand for equality is always raised as demand for social change, that is changes in that part of the social structure which is found to be 'alterable' as well as unjust. If nature has imposed the burden of child-bearing on women, some may consider it unjust but nobody would make it a political issue because this aspect of natural inequality between the sexes is unalterable. If some are more beautiful, talented or energetic than others, and thus enjoy more importance, this would not be resented in society unless the more gifted persons employ their natural qualities to oppress or exploit others. So long as authority and division of labour are based on rational grounds, inequality of status and position does not become objectionable. The relation between teacher and student, doctor and patient, traffic-controller and road-user, etc. may involve some sort of dominance and subordination, but so long as authority is exercised in the general interest, inequality is not at issue.

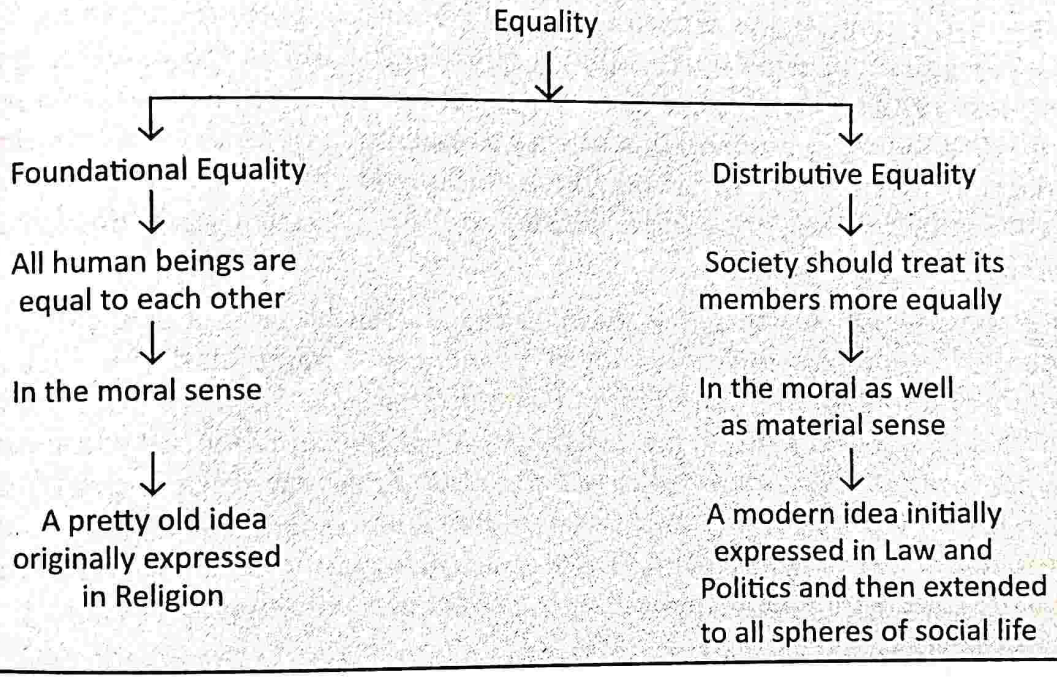
Inequality becomes a ground of complaint and resentment only when it is thought to be unjust. To be sure, equality demands a progressive reduction of inequalities where they are thought to be unreasonable; it does not imply literal equalization. In other words, inequality in society may be thought to be 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable', according to the prevalent idea of social justice. According to the prevalent view of ancient slave-owning society, medieval feudal society and early capitalist society, inequality between master and slave, lord and serf, capitalist and worker was regarded reasonable. But with the development of the socialist view of justice, especially the Marxian view, this inequality was regarded unjust and unreasonable, and hence challenged. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) have amply demonstrated that the division of society into classes—capitalists and workers, bourgeoisie and proletariat, haves and have-

nots—involves 'exploitation' and that this is prejudicial to the development of the conditions of human happiness.

The ideal of equality does not contemplate that all material goods, entire national income or all educational opportunities available in society should be equally distributed among all members of society. It rather means that men, who are different in their physical and mental capacities, aptitudes and skills, talents and energies, should be given equal opportunities for the development of their personal qualities and capacities, in the shape of material goods, comforts, education, training, etc.

R.H. Tawney, in his powerful book on *Equality* (1938), argued that opponents of equality sought to contradict a view of equality which was not maintained by its defenders. Egalitarians did not believe in abolishing all differences in incomes so as to ensure 'equal shares for all'. They only aimed at the pooling of the surplus resources of the nation's income by means of taxation so as to create the conditions of well-being for all members of society. By opposing the case for 'equalization of all incomes', anti-egalitarians are 'bombarding a position which no one occupies'.

Distinction Between Foundational and Distributive Equality


Equality
Foundational Equality
All human beings are equal to each other
In the moral sense
A pretty old idea originally expressed in Religion
Distributive Equality
Society should treat its members more equally
In the moral as well as material sense
A modern idea initially expressed in Law and Politics and then extended to all spheres of social life

II
EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents.

John F. Kennedy (1963)

Equality of opportunity is an important tenet of egalitarianism. Egalitarians hold that all human beings have equal social and political rights. Egalitarianism regards equality as the basic principle of public policy. It implies that no rational grounds have to be stated while conceding equal opportunities, equal rights and equal benefits to different individuals; justification must be given only when inequality or discrimination among them is sought to be introduced or maintained.

Promoting equality among human beings is by no means a simple task. At the outset, it is necessary to distinguish between *equality of outcome* and *equality of opportunity*. Equality of outcome is the goal of hard-core egalitarians. It implies equal distribution of rewards, such as income, wealth and other social goods. Since men differ not only in their social and family backgrounds but also in their talents and efforts, equal distribution of rewards disregarding these differences will involve injustice apart from killing incentive among the more competent and industrious. This would result in lesser production and lower level of excellence. Lesser production means lesser distribution even when it is equal! If we fail to prevent general impoverishment of society, adherence to the principle of literal equality will hardly give any relief to the poor. This line of argument impels us to surrender the goal of 'equality of outcome' in favour of 'equality of opportunity'.

Now the principle of equality of opportunity may be applied in two distinct situations: (*a*) Competitive situation; and (*b*) Non-competitive situation. In a competitive situation, equality of opportunity implies access to a scarce good or prize (*e.g.* in the case of coming first in a race or an examination). In a non-competitive situation, it implies equal access to essential goods and services plus a good of one's choice, depending upon one's ability and effort. Success in any field of excellence like music, art, culture, academics, law, engineering or medicine is the case in point.

In a competitive situation, all competitors should be placed in identical or near-identical situation. For example, all players in a game start from equally favourable or unfavourable conditions; all should pass a test to prove that none has taken a drug or any other stimulant. In a non-competitive situation, all participants should get a minimum support plus 'separate but equal' facilities to prove their worth. Equality of opportunity in a competitive situation is fit for market society or meritocracy. On the other hand, equality of opportunity in a non-competitive situation is fit for a moderate egalitarian society or the 'community of equals'.

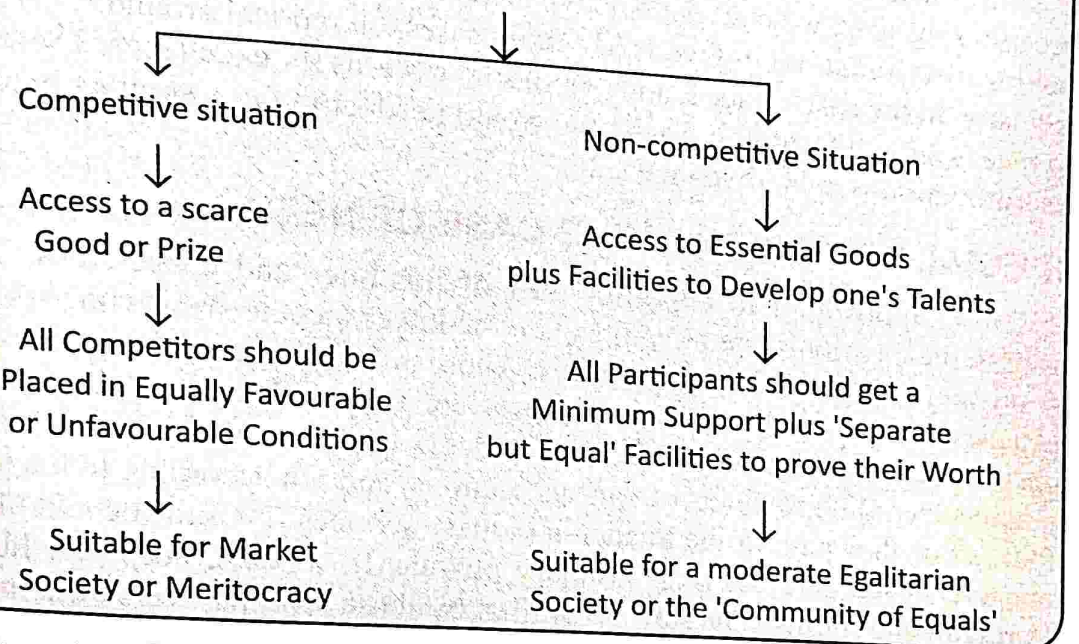
Market Society

Market society refers to a model of society where all social relationships are reduced to market relations, that is the relations between supplier and consumer. Accordingly, all individuals (or families) are expected to ascertain each other's needs and earn their living by fulfilling them. Thus, the market society cultivates respect for each other's dealings for mutual advantage. However, since its organization is based on the cruel forces of demand and supply, it has little room for human considerations or sympathetic treatment towards disadvantaged people.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy refers to a hypothetical system of social organization in which highest positions are assigned to the wisest, most talented and highly educated members of society. This term was introduced by Michael Young in his noted work *The Rise of Meritocracy* (1961). He argued that under the modern technocracy in America, the practice of distribution of high offices on the basis of political loyalty and service was giving way to the rising demand of merit. He held that the provision of equal opportunities on the basis of merit was bound to deprive the lower classes of competent leadership. On the other hand, the meritorious in any field would get instant recognition. As a result, the social distance between upper and lower classes would be widened. This system would prove particularly oppressive to the ordinary, weaker and disadvantaged sections of society.

Dimensions of Equality of Opportunity


Criteria of Allocation
Competitive situation
Access to a scarce Good or Prize
All Competitors should be Placed in Equally Favourable or Unfavourable Conditions
Suitable for Market Society or Meritocracy
Non-competitive Situation
Access to Essential Goods plus Facilities to Develop one's Talents
All Participants should get a Minimum Support plus 'Separate but Equal' Facilities to prove their Worth
Suitable for a moderate Egalitarian Society or the 'Community of Equals'

Advocates of equality of opportunity argue that government's task is to create equal opportunities for its citizens; it is for each individual to decide whether to use and opportunity or neglect it! Even when a citizen chooses to use the opportunity, his achievement would depend on his talent and effort. In any case, *equality of opportunity* is seldom likely to result in equality of outcome.

In short, equality of opportunity calls for creating conditions in which everyone has the same starting point, or equal life chances. It seeks to reduce the impact of inequalities attached to social, cultural and economic backgrounds of various persons but agrees to giving them differential rewards according to their differential talents, skills and efforts. This again is quite difficult in practice. Those who had a poor start in life because of long-standing social inequalities will have to be given some special concession, such as exemption from fees, relaxation of age-

limit and reservation of seats or posts, etc. Further, effective steps will have to be taken by the state and society to ensure educational and cultural development of the disadvantaged sections apart from promoting their material well-being. In this way, equality of opportunity calls for extending the process of 'equalizing' to the roots of our social structure.

III
RATIONAL GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

If equality does not imply literal equality in distribution of rights and advantages, then it must accept discrimination on certain grounds. What are those grounds? Since we defend the principle of equality on the basis of 'reason' or 'logic', we can safely say that equality allows discrimination on *'reasonable', 'rational', 'logical'*, or *'relevant'* grounds. What is reasonable and what is not so depends on the level of social consciousness of a given society. For our purpose, rational grounds of discrimination could be determined according to the modern consciousness. Broadly speaking, we can identify two areas for making special provision, that is making discrimination in favour of certain cases, on rational grounds : (*a*) Special provision in the case of need; and (*b*) Special rewards for excellence. These are by no means simple formulae. Each case would need a thorough scrutiny before any discrimination is actually conceded.

SPECIAL PROVISION IN THE CASE OF NEED

This may apply both to apportionment of liabilities and concessions. Thus a progressive taxation system would spare the lower income slabs while tax would go on increasing on the higher slabs. Those in the lower slabs are exempted because they are unable to pay tax; they are supposed to be already living at subsistence level. Similarly, provision of public goods and social services has to be made according to needs of various sections, and not according to the amount of taxes that they pay for the financing of these services. Thus the benefit of cheap transport, postal services (*e.g.* ordinary post card), schools, hospitals, libraries, entertainment, etc. may largely be availed by those who pay very little towards their financing. Scholarships may be given on merit-cum-means basis (in fact, merit would be the secondary criterion; means would be the first consideration).

Public Goods

Public goods are those goods (or services) which are necessary for everybody's survival, so these must be supplied to everyone without excluding anybody. For example, clean air or national defence will have to be made available to every resident of the state. Obviously the provision of public goods cannot be left to the market forces where nothing can be obtained without paying the price. Nor it can be arranged through voluntary subscription. So allocation of public goods has to be made by the government of a country who will finance it through necessary taxation. Taxes do not represent the price of public goods demanded from their individual beneficiaries, but the price of securing safe, smooth and decent conditions of living for the community as a whole.

Public funds would be kept readily available to rush aid to victims of fire, flood, famine, earthquake, epidemic, war or crime, etc. The state is obliged to provide for uneconomic roads, and other essential supplies and services, such as transport services, water, electricity and fuel, foodgrains, milk, vegetables, etc. at subsidized rates in order to meet the genuine needs of the community. Reservation of jobs and other advantages for the weaker sections, such as women, the handicapped, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, etc. largely conforms to this criterion.

SPECIAL REWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The doctrine of equality is sometimes dubbed 'philosophy of poverty', not only because it tends to serve the cause of the poor but also because it tends to impoverish society in its standards of excellence. Thus David Hume (1711-76) had argued that equality would endanger the virtues of 'art, care and industry' and instead of preventing want in a few, it would lead to the impoverishment of the entire community. Such a view is based either on a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the principle of equality. Such apprehensions about the impact of equality stem from its interpretation as literal equalization of rewards irrespective of talents, efforts and even needs of various individuals. A rational view of equality does not accept this position. In fact faith in equality neither implies equalization of results nor disrespect of excellence.

Special provision for excellence is itself a basic tenet of the principle of equality. It comes into play when basic 'needs' have been largely met, and special talents and efforts are to be given special rewards *provided they are beneficial to society.* Let us take the example of an orchestra group. It is quite possible that we may get an 'equal' or 'near equal' performance of each artist by giving finest instruments to the less skilled and very ordinary instruments to the finest players. A similar equality may be obtained by giving very good books to the students of low calibre and ordinary books to the most brilliant; or by giving excellent clothes to the plain-featured girls, and ordinary clothes to the most beautiful girls! But is such equality desirable, not to speak of reasonable? Such a ridiculous interpretation of equality can be expected only from its opponents, and not from its supporters.

Equality is meant to create conditions where talents would not rot, where special efforts would not go waste. A rational interpretation of equality would insist that, after making necessary provision for the basic needs, best musical instruments should be given to the best players, best books to the best students, and best clothes to the best girls. This criterion should not be taken as unconditional acceptance of the 'market society model'. We have made an important *proviso* that *such excellence should be beneficial to society:* A market society eulogizes 'private profit' as the highest virtue, and allows the 'manipulators' to earn largest profits for their private consumption, even at the expense of the vulnerable sections of society. The principle of excellence, on the contrary, postulates a situation in which the service rendered to society becomes the sole criterion of distinction and special reward which is conducive to promoting the spirit of fraternity.

Fraternity

Fraternity refers to a sentiment which informs the members of a community who share a common culture, common values, an awareness of the common interest and engage in the common effort to achieve a social goal.

Persons in the same profession may also evolve a sense of affinity with each other and regard themselves to be bound by a thread of fraternity. They may develop a deeper understanding of each other, share their experiences, and be ready to help each other to solve their problems.

IV
DEBATE ON REVERSE DISCRIMINATION

If the principle of equality is interpreted to concede discrimination in favour of some deprived sections, this would not go unchallenged. In the United States, this issue has given rise to the debate on 'reverse discrimination'. It means that when favoured treatment is accorded to the 'hitherto deprived sections', particularly to blacks and women, others have a ground to complain that they are being deprived of equality of opportunity, In other words, discrimination in favour of the deprived sections results in discrimination against the general category. When some sections are entitled to a privileged access to job opportunities and higher education or professional training, it involves reverse discrimination toward other sections. It is argued that if equality means 'removal of discrimination', there is no justification for turning the existing discriminatory practice on the basis of race and sex in the reverse direction.

Some of the champions of 'affirmative action' for the deprived sections argue that since blacks and women were deprived of adequate opportunities of their development in the past, they should now be compensated for the loss. Others contend that preferential treatment for these sections will help in fulfilling the objective of substantive equality. For instance, an increase in the number of black doctors and lawyers would establish their real equality with the whites. Still others claim that since the opportunities of advancement in social life are so scarce, these should be allocated not merely on the grounds of 'merit' but also on the basis of 'need'. The need of the deprived sections is so pressing that if they have the minimum required qualifications, they should be given preferential treatment in the allocation of jobs and educational opportunities to enable them to escape the tough competition.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action refers to the public policy which accords special concession in matters of admission to sought-after courses of education and training, appointments, promotions, housing, health-care, etc. to those who were deprived of adequate opportunities in an open competition, particularly due to some discriminatory practices of the past. It is meant to compensate the relevant sections (*e.g.* women, blacks, backward communities, etc.) for the injustice meted out to them in the past.

Among the opponents of 'affirmative action', the champions of neo-conservatism hold that the principle of equality in society can only be applied in the sphere of 'equality of opportunity'. An attempt to establish the 'equality of outcome' by affirmative action would be disastrous because it would erode the spontaneous respect for merit and authority which is the foundation of social stability and progress. Others argue that such affirmative action is inimical to procedural justice. If blacks and women *collectively* get favoured treatment over whites and men, rather than *individually* as deprived persons, it is quite likely that the rich and socially advantaged blacks and women—who happen to be the opinion leaders of these categories of persons—get preference over poor and underprivileged whites and men. It is also argued that whites and men of the present generation are not responsible for the injustice meted out to the older generation of blacks and women. To penalize them for no fault of theirs is tantamount to departure from substantive justice. Finally, some opponents of affirmative action contend that personal dignity and self-respect are the cornerstone of the philosophy of equality. If a person knows that his or her position is the reward of preferential treatment rather than his or her merit, it will hurt his or her self-respect and give rise to a feeling of inferiority.

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice refers to a view of justice which holds that it is necessary to determine a just procedure for allocation of benefits and burdens in society; then its outcome will be automatically treated as just. It implies that the function of justice is to regulate the mutual relations between individuals and groups by evolving reasonable rules and procedures which should be impartially applied to all categories of persons. It requires that no individual or group would oppress another by force or fraud. Using the analogy of race, it insists on laying down rules of the game, such as there is no cheating, nobody jumps the gun, and nobody has unfair advantage by using a stimulant, then it would be immaterial as to who wins or loses the race.

Procedural justice is regarded to be commendable because it obliterates all discrimination between human beings on grounds of caste, creed, sex, race, region, language and culture, etc. and accepts equal worth and dignity of all human beings. Procedural justice is usually contrasted with substantive justice which holds that the outcome of allocation of benefits and burdens in society should be just (that is it should be favourable to the deprived and underprivileged), the procedure for making this allocation can be suitably adjusted to achieve this end.

In India, the issue of 'reverse discrimination' is not raised as loudly as in America, because Indian society is particularly sympathetic towards the deprived sections. But here, too, the problem of identification of deserving cases is quite serious. In a country afflicted by widespread poverty and acute scarcity there is always the danger that the more alert and vocal sections of the so-called backward classes might corner all the benefits meant for the deprived sections. In order to remedy this situation the Supreme Court of India has ruled in 1992

that the 'creamy layers' among the backward classes should be excluded from the benefits of reservation meant for these classes so that they accrue to the genuine and deserving cases only. Again, in order to save the new generation from utter frustration and lack of incentive, it is sometimes suggested that the backward classes should be provided with necessary assistance in their educational and professional development whereafter they should be obliged to compete with the general category. Indeed the question of reverse discrimination demands a very cautious solution!

Creamy Layer

Creamy layer refers to that part of a backward community which is relatively advanced and well-off. This part is sought to be excluded from the concessions meant for the backward community in question so that the benefits so provided are diverted to the really deserving cases.

V
DIMENSIONS OF EQUALITY

FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

When we try to apply the principle of equality to various spheres of social life, we come across many forms of equality. These forms or dimensions of equality may be considered as an attempt to understand the implications of the same principle from different angles. At the outset, we may distinguish between formal equality and substantive equality. When we join a queue and wait for our turn, we are governed by the same rule: 'First come, first served'. In this respect we are treated equally. It is the manifestation of formal equality. Those joining the queue or waiting for their turn are not discriminated on any other ground like their social or economic status, race or religion, etc.

But when ladies, senior citizens or physically challenged persons are allowed to form a separate queue to help them to get quicker service, the general rule is relaxed in favour of the needy, weaker or vulnerable sections. This step marks the transition from the sphere of formal equality to substantive equality. In short, formal equality implies the absence of discrimination in making the sought-after things available to all citizens whereas substantive equality tends to help the weaker and deprived sections to have those things with lesser effort or at lesser cost. If the facilities of education, medical care, travel and entertainment are open to all, *i.e.* anybody can avail himself of these facilities if he can pay for them, this would amount to formal equality. But if the state gives concessions, scholarships or other incentives to the poor and deprived sections to take advantage of these facilities, this would be termed as substantive equality.

Broadly speaking, legal as well as political equality comes within the purview of formal equality, while the provision of legal aid to the poor and needy sections would be a step in the direction of substantive equality. On the other hand,

social and economic equality is intended to meet the requirements of substantive equality.

LEGAL EQUALITY

The principle of equality was first put forward as the demand for legal equality, that is the grant of equal legal status to all individuals in society irrespective of their birth, physical and mental capacities, or other differences. Jean-Jaques Rousseau, in his *The Social Contract* (1762), held that the extension of legal equality to all citizens was the primary characteristic of civil society. As he observed:

> It is that instead of destroying natural equality, the fundamental pact... substitutes a moral and lawful equality for the physical inequality which nature imposed upon men, so that, although unequal in strength or intellect, they all become equal by convention and legal right.

The idea of legal equality thus emanates from moral considerations and serves as the basis of equal rights of men. Ernest Barker, in his *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (1951), has argued:

> The State which vests us with legal personalities...or 'masks', vests us all with equal masks, partly because it simply cannot distinguish our differences even if it would...but ultimately for the far deeper reason that we all matter equally before the law, whatever our differences may be...The principle of Equality accordingly means that whatever conditions are guaranteed to me, in the form of rights, shall also, and in the same measure, be guaranteed to others, and that whatever rights are given to others shall also be given to me.

Legal equality, which is taken for granted today, was in fact won after a prolonged struggle in human history. Ancient societies usually did not even entertain the idea of legal equality. For instance, *Manusmriti*, ancient Hindu scripture and statute-book, prescribed different grades of punishment for the same offence according to the caste of the offender: the lower the caste, the harsher the punishment. On the civil side, it prescribed different rates of interest chargeable from borrowers: the higher the caste, the lower the rate of interest. Similarly, Aristotle, ancient Greek philosopher, recommended differential punishments for the same offence for freemen and slaves, on the alleged ground that the slave was less sensitive to punishment! Barker has given an elaborate description of the struggle for legal equality, with instances from recent history. He has observed:

> There was a long reign of legal inequality. Down to 1772 the slave was denied any legal capacity on English soil; he was not a person in the eye of the law, and he had no share in the enjoyment of rights... Under the laws regulating the suffrage down to the year 1918 a person in receipt of poor relief was similarly condemned to an inferior degree of legal capacity by being denied the right of voting along with and on the same terms as others...Under the common law relating to property, married women down to 1870 were destitute of legal capacity for ownership;...under the laws regulating the suffrage all women, down to 1918, were without any legal capacity for exercising a vote (*Principles of Social and Political Theory*; 1951).

The principle of legal equality, or equality before the law, comprises the foundation of legal justice in the present-day world. J.R. Lucas, in his *Principles of Politics* (1976), has observed:

> Equality before the law does not guarantee equal treatment by the law but equal access to the law, and consideration only of those factors laid down by the law as relevant. Nobody is so lowly as not to have recourse to the courts, nobody is so mighty as not to have to answer to the courts: anybody can invoke the courts' aid, everybody must render them obedience: and the courts will decide disputes, after hearing arguments on both sides, fairly and impartially, without fear or favour.

In short, legal equality implies equal subjection of all citizens to the law and equal protection of the laws for all citizens.

However, legal equality by itself is no guarantee of justice in a society afflicted with extremes of wealth and poverty, as in India. Equality before the law can secure equal benefit of the law for all citizens only when all citizens can equally afford to approach the courts of law for restoration of their rights or recompense of any injury inflicted on them. So long as legal costs remain exorbitant, legal procedures remain too intricate and economic disparities among various sections of the population remain too wide, it is doubtful whether formal equality before the law is going to secure justice for all citizens. Harold J.Laski, in his *State in Theory and Practice* (1935), has significantly observed:

> Nor must we forget the fact that wealth is a decisive factor in the power to take advantage of the opportunities the law affords its citizens to protect their rights. The ability to undertake an action in the courts, even with the provision made for legal aid to the poor, remains a grim financial question, and, on the civil side of the law, with its massive hierarchy of appeals, the advantage is solidly with the rich...as a general rule, the ablest lawyers will be at the service of those only who are able to afford them.

We, in India, are quite familiar with this drawback of legal equality. The irony of the situation is that, whereas an innocent poor is hardly able to defend himself in a court of law, smugglers, black marketeers, profiteers, adulterators and other anti-social elements manage to engage the best brains to defend them in the law-courts!

Lucas has also warned: "Justice is not served if the case of one party is incompetently presented and that of the other superbly well by the best barrister that money can buy" *(The Principles of Politics;* 1976). Under the circumstances, a great responsibility devolves on the judges who must view the cases in their proper socio-economic perspective. Provision of legal aid can also be somewhat helpful, within certain limitations. As Lucas has further observed :

> We rely heavily on our judges to discover the real merits of the case in spite of the differing abilities of counsel. But we rightly ensure by means of Legal Aid that equal access to the courts is at least not an empty Equality, and that nobody is denied a hearing through inarticulateness or poverty.

The matter does not end here. The judges are guided by their own social philosophy, which is again the product of socio-economic conditions. It is true that the rich are able to hire the services of the most competent lawyers, and that the most successful lawyers, and judges too, usually come from the upper strata of society who are likely to apply their energies to safeguard the interests of the rich out of their conviction. Here, again, what Laski has observed in the context of England applies to India as well. In his *Parliamentary Government in England* (1938), Laski pointed out :

> Our judges are recruited from the ranks of successful lawyers; and, overwhelmingly, our system makes the successful lawyer a man who has spent the major part of his life in serving the interests of property. He comes, therefore, almost unconsciously, to accept the assumptions of the economic system in being, and to adopt, without examination, the legal doctrines evolved for the protection of those interests.

It is, therefore, evident that although legal equality represents an important achievement of the modern state, it is not adequate without suitable changes in our socio-economic structure.

POLITICAL EQUALITY

Political equality denotes the equality of political rights of citizens. It implies the right to be represented in decision-making bodies on an equal footing, *i.e.* on 'one man, one vote' basis. It also postulates that nobody will be barred from holding political office on grounds of gender, race, caste, creed, region, etc. This in turn means that there will be no privileged classes in society entitled to rule, and that the rulers will not accord any special consideration to the will or interests of any particular individual or group in society. The doctrine of political equality is derived from the general belief that man as such is a rational being, capable of political judgement irrespective of his physical and mental capacities, education and wealth, etc. It also proceeds from the assumption that when equal political rights are extended to all men, they will be able to give best expression to the common good and to prevail upon policy-makers to adjust public policy to the requirements of the common good.

The demand for political equality originated along with that of legal equality—they were undifferentiated in the beginning. As D.D. Raphael has observed: "The French Revolutionaries, in demanding equality, were demanding the removal of arbitrary privilege, such as that which confined political rights to the rich and the well-born" (*Problems of Political Philosophy;* 1976). In a later phase of development of liberal theory, political equality came to be identified more and more with the democratic rights of the people and universalization of franchise, equal freedom to hold and express political opinions without fear or favour, and equal right to form associations to influence political decisions.

Political equality started as a progressive idea. It led to the establishment of democracy in the Western world. This was, however, found to be inadequate by the masses whose hopes and aspirations were belied by the prevailing socio-economic inequalities. The achievement of political equality was, therefore, followed by

the demand for socio-economic equality. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59), French author *of Democracy in America* (1835-40), postulated that the discrepancy between political equality and economic inequality would not be indefinitely accepted by the democratic people. He, therefore, held that the first phase of the democratic world revolution, political in nature, would inevitably lead to the second phase, which would be primarily social and economic. He foresaw that the political struggle would be followed, before long, by a struggle between the haves and the have-nots. He noted that the working class had turned from political to social questions, and that they were forming ideas and opinions destined to eliminate economic inequality from society. Thus Tocqueville anticipated the growth of socialist theory which chiefly concerned itself with the problem of socio-economic equality.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY

The term socio-economic equality embraces both social equality and economic equality. In fact, these two aspects of equality are so closely related that they should properly be considered together. It is significant that while legal and political equality may be given a *formal* interpretation as the 'absence of discrimination' with little impact on the existing socio-economic structure, social and economic equality demands a *substantive* interpretation, as the force behind social change. While the idea of legal-political equality arose as the cry of early liberalism, the concept of socio-economic equality was articulated as the goal of socialism. Socio-economic equality signified the further development of the concept of equality. It was, therefore, a more progressive idea which was later adopted by positive liberal theory.

Liberalism

Liberalism refers to a principle of politics which regards 'liberty' or 'freedom' of individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. Liberty, in this sense, implies 'liberation' from restraints, particularly from the restraints imposed by an authoritarian state. This principle was evolved in the West in late seventeenth century in order to liquidate feudal privileges of the landowning class and to create favourable conditions for the new entrepreneurial class to enable them to contribute to social progress.

Socialism

As a principle of politics, socialism favours social ownership and control of the means of social production so that all able-bodied persons could be suitably employed in productive work, and all means of social production could be deployed for the fulfilment of social needs.

So long as the principle of equality is not extended to the economic sphere, the operation of legal-political equality will continue to serve the interests of the richer class without substantial benefit for the masses. As Benn and Peters have significantly observed:

A wealthy *elite* would continue to exercise effective political power; judges

and legislators would still be drawn from its ranks, and predisposed to favour it. Legal costs would put justice beyond the poor man's reach. Without social equality, 'equality before the law' would remain an empty form (*Social Principles and the Democratic State;* 1975).

Thus while the demand for legal-political equality was raised to press the claims of the new middle class—the merchant-industrialist class or the bourgeoisie—to political power, the demand for socio-economic equality was put forward to assert the rights of the working class or the proletariat—to enable them to shape their destiny. In other words, the ideal of legal-political equality was advanced in order to replace feudalism by capitalism, while that of socio-economic equality was meant to promote socialism in order to rectify the faults of capitalism. Marxian socialism, which made socio-economic equality its supreme goal, advocates replacement of the capitalist system itself by socialist system with a view to securing a classless society in the process. In any case, it is evident that while the slogan of legal and political equality was raised as a progressive idea in order to secure liberty, equality and justice for humanity itself, it was reduced to the philosophy of the *status quo*—maintenance of the existing order—as soon as it had won political power for the capitalist class. The slogan of socio-economic equality was then raised in order to bring the mission of 'progress' to its logical conclusion.

Champions of socio-economic equality argued that the capitalist system had only won formal liberty for the people in legal and political sphere, while a handful of property-owners continued to control the lives of the masses, because the masses had to yield to the wishes of the capitalist class in order to earn their livelihood. As R.H. Tawney, in his *Equality* (1938), has elucidated:

> There are certain natural resources, certain kinds of property, certain types of economic organization, on the use of which the mass of mankind depend for their well-being. The masters of these resources, therefore, are in a position, in the absence of countervailing measures, to secure exceptionally favourable terms for themselves, and to exercise an unusual degree of control over lives of their fellows.

Socio-economic equality may be distinguished from legal-political equality in respect of its scale of measurement also. While legal equality implies the recognition of the 'equal legal personality' in each individual, and political equality asserts the 'one man, one vote' principle, socio-economic equality does not insist on 'equal shares for all'. In other words, whereas legal-political equality postulates literal or near literal equality, socio-economic equality only demands the reduction of gross inequalities, according to the prevalent concept of social justice. In the absence of an absolute standard, such as perfect equality in the socio-economic sphere, socio-economic equality insists on a progressive extension of social benefits to the deprived and underprivileged sections. This leads us to the transition from formal to substantive equality, from negative to positive equality, and from static to dynamic equality. For instance, equality of opportunity in the legal-formal sense may be interpreted to mean that opportunities of education, employment, travel, entertainment, etc. shall be open to everybody without discrimination, but this

does not ensure that such opportunities will be actually available to all sections of society. Formal equality may not seek to make any effective dent in the existing socio-economic structure; it may reduce attractive opportunities to a mere piece of decoration, which are open to everybody but available only to the chosen few. Socio-economic equality, on the contrary, insists on the progressive equalization of opportunities.

An ideal condition of socio-economic equality was expressed in Louis Blanc's classic formula: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.' This rule was adopted by Marx as a principle of distribution in his projected communist society which is characterized by the highest technological development, universal labour and a classless society so that there is abundant production to meet social needs, ensuring satisfaction of everybody's needs—a condition of perfect happiness. However, for the interim stage of socialist society, this rule was modified as: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work'. Lenin (1870-1924) described it as a 'bourgeois right' which was to be retained in socialist society for practical reasons. This, at least, ensures the 'right to work' and the 'right to maintenance'—the satisfaction of basic needs, if not comforts and luxuries, for each citizen.

Socio-economic equality, therefore, postulates the right to equal satisfaction of basic needs, which implies state provision of education and employment as also of essential social services such as cheap transport, housing, fair price shops, hospitals, community centres, public parks, health resorts, etc. State regulation of industrial conditions of work, minimum wages, workman compensation, pensions, etc. are also intended to serve the cause of socio-economic equality.

It is important to note that for the provision of essential social services, the modern state resorts to the policy of progressive taxation which means, the larger the income or property, the higher the tax. This policy, usually associated with the 'welfare state', ensures that social services will be financed according to the citizens' capacity to pay while these would be availed of according to citizens' needs. W. Friedman, in his *Law in a Changing Society* (1959), has significantly observed :

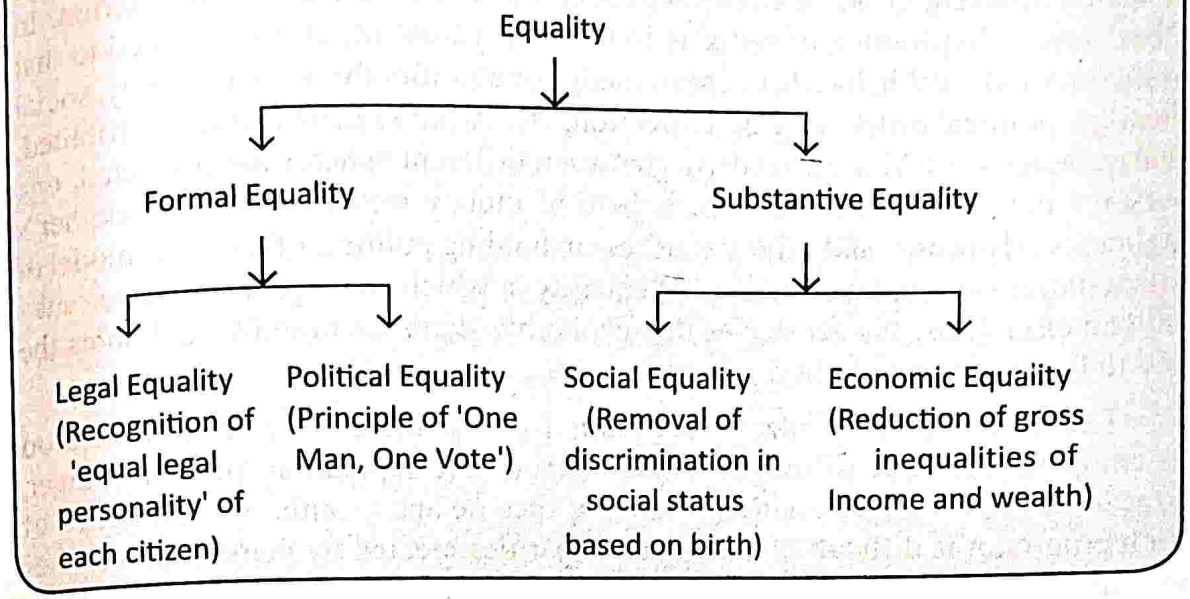
> Taxation is one of the most important weapons by which the State can mitigate the two objectionable aspects of unrestricted private property: first, the inequalities of wealth, and secondly, the power to use property for private profit, and without regard to community purposes... By graded taxation and surtax on high incomes, gross inequalities of wealth are evened out more easily than by the equalization of incomes or the abolition of private property... Taxation is a cheap means by which the State finances its costly social service schemes.

Welfare State

Welfare state refers to the state that safeguards liberty of its citizens and also takes care of satisfying their basic needs, *e.g.* food, clothing, shelter, health-care, elementary education and recreation etc.—particularly of those who cannot afford these things from their own income or other resources. It makes use of public resources and taxation of the relatively rich to provide for a vast network of social services and social security.

In short, while Marxian ideology seeks to secure socio-economic equality by a wholesale replacement of the capitalist system by the socialist system, through socialization of the major means of production and making work compulsory for all citizens, liberal theory seeks to promote socio-economic equality by small and piecemeal adjustments within the capitalist system itself.

Distinction Between Formal and Substantive Equality


Equality
Formal Equality
Substantive Equality
Legal Equality (Recognition of 'equal legal personality' of each citizen)
Political Equality (Principle of 'One Man, One Vote')
Social Equality (Removal of discrimination in social status based on birth)
Economic Equality (Reduction of gross inequalities of Income and wealth)

VI
SIMPLE AND COMPLEX EQUALITY

Distinction between simple and complex equality presents an alternative classification of distributive equality. In an atmosphere of equality of opportunity, differentials in abilities and efforts are bound to create inequality of outcome. If the state tries to remove this inequality by force, it would not only amount to curbing freedom, but also killing incentive. This will result in general impoverishment of society and the consequent fall in general welfare. On the other hand, if the existing inequalities of income and wealth are allowed to continue and society remains divided by large disparities in standards of living, people will be prevented from understanding and sympathizing with each other's predicament. Such a society will not be able to evolve the feeling of community or fraternity among people which makes society worth living.

Simple equality implies just distribution of the same good (*e.g.* income, wealth, power, etc.) to different persons. It seeks to avoid anyone's exclusive control or 'dominance' over any good which deprives others of their fair share. In practice, this implies that (*a*) the differential rewards received by people should correspond to the real differences in their effort and ability; (*b*) no one's standard of living should fall below a prescribed minimum; and (*c*) the range of inequality should not be so great as to give rise to class divisions. When the principle of equality seeks

to contain vast disparities of income and wealth in society, it corresponds to simple equality.

Michael Walzer, in his celebrated work *Spheres of Justice* (1983), has introduced the concept of complex equality which marks a departure from that of simple equality. Complex equality is concerned with just distribution of different goods to different persons. Walzer has argued that the modern society includes a number of spheres of distribution (*e.g.* market, profession, politics, family, etc.) in which different goods are allocated each by its own independent criterion. In other words, distribution of rewards in the modern society is not confined to that of income and wealth, but there are so many sought-after things (*e.g.* money, social prestige, political office, love and affection, etc.) which must be justly distributed. Walzer asserts that if the boundaries between different spheres are respected, one person's pre-eminence in, say, the sphere of money may be offset by another's higher social prestige and a third's success in holding political office. This model of social pluralism may lead to a kind of equality in which no one decisively outranks anyone else. Thus, Walzer denies that economic status of an individual holds the key to his social prestige and power.

The problem with Walzer's suggestion is that there is no reliable method to compare the value of non-economic factors like reputation, political power, education and health, etc. with the value of income and wealth. In the absence of such criteria, it is difficult to attack the disparities created by market society. For example, it would be a poor consolation for a university teacher, scholar, writer, artist or scientist that the low economic return of his talents and efforts is compensated by the high esteem in which he is held in society!

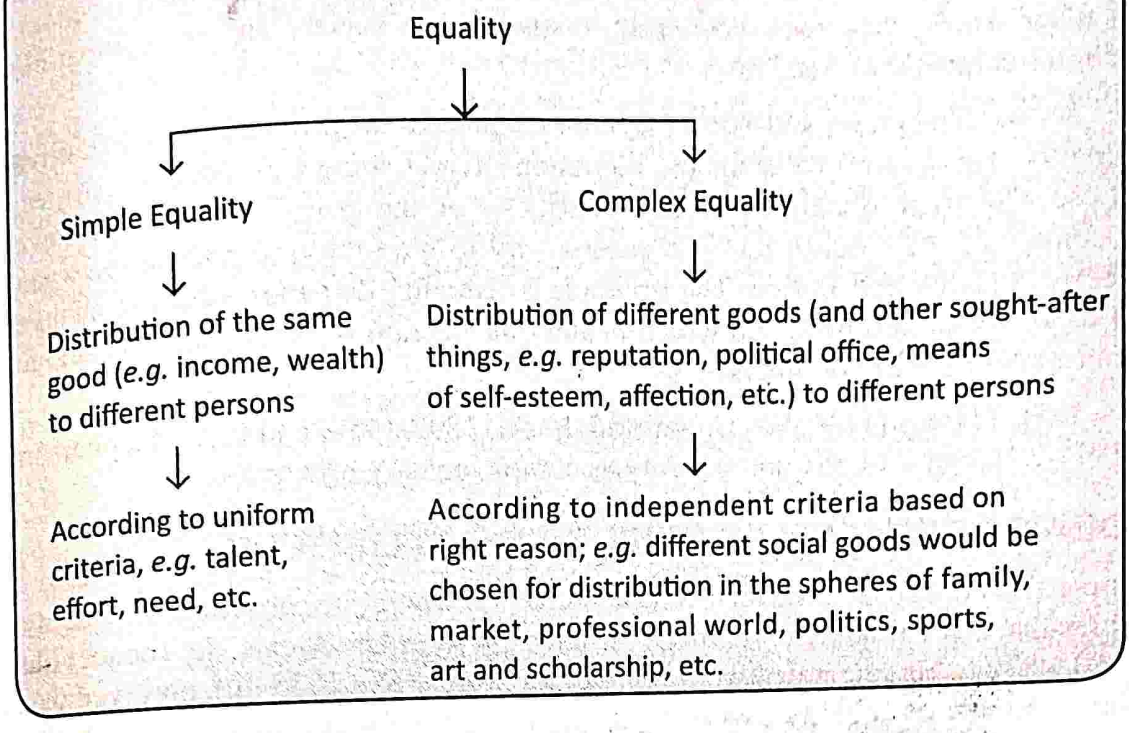
In fact, Walzer gives precedence to ethical considerations over economic considerations. Walzer argues that a society of equals lies within our reach. It is implicit in our shared understandings of social goods. These understandings do not produce a vision of 'simple equality' which will lead to immense inequalities through the operation of free market. If the state tries to reinforce initial simple equality, it will end up as a tyrannical state. In our shared understandings we strive for 'complex equality'. According to Walzer,

> complex equality means that no citizen's standing in one sphere or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good ... No social good x should be distributed to men and women who possess some other social good y merely because they possess y and without regard to the meaning of x.

Walzer comes to the conclusion that the distribution of social goods should be determined according to the right reason as applicable in each sphere. Thus the sphere of politics, or health or education should not be corrupted by the domination of money, for money properly rules in the sphere of commodities; the sphere of office should not (beyond a certain limited point) be contaminated by nepotism, which belongs to the sphere of kinship and love; the sphere of kinship and love should not be dominated by the consideration of profit and loss which are relevant only in the market-place; family organization should not be patterned after male domination which properly belongs to the sphere of military organization.

If Walzer's suggestions are adopted in actual practice, we will certainly have a just society which he intends to create. But he has not indicated the way how to convince the dominant people in different spheres of social life to adopt these rules. *Walzer's scheme of things embodies a strong moral philosophy but it does not provide for equally strong political philosophy.*

Distinction Between Simple and Complex Equality


Equality
Simple Equality
Distribution of the same good (e.g. income, wealth) to different persons
According to uniform criteria, e.g. talent, effort, need, etc.
Complex Equality
Distribution of different goods (and other sought-after things, e.g. reputation, political office, means of self-esteem, affection, etc.) to different persons
According to independent criteria based on right reason; e.g. different social goods would be chosen for distribution in the spheres of family, market, professional world, politics, sports, art and scholarship, etc.

VII
LIBERTY AND EQUALITY

When we consider the relation between liberty and equality, it must be realized that different interpretations of these principles lead to different conclusions in this regard. In other words, these principles may be found mutually complementary or contradictory in different contexts.

LIBERTY AND EQUALITY AS COMPLEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

The principle of liberty stipulates 'equal' liberty or freedom for everyone. If freedom of one becomes unfreedom of another, it would be against the spirit of freedom itself. If freedom of the strong destroys freedom of the weak, if freedom of the clever undermines freedom of the simple, and if freedom of the rich turns out to be a constraint on freedom of the poor, it would amount to negation of freedom as a universal principle. In this sense, liberty and equality are complementary principles. This view concedes the imposition of reasonable restraints on freedom so that freedom of one does not stand in the way of similar and equal freedom of

another.

In a primitive society, nobody is allowed to use his physical or manipulative power to harm any other member of the community. With the development of civilization, many new and subtle means of oppression and exploitation are evolved. Property is one of such means. While the few cannot enslave society by pooling their physical and mental powers, they can do so by accumulating unlimited property. Property can also be used to hire best talents and labour power. Thus property is the most potent instrument of depriving others of their freedom. In other words, vast socio-economic inequalities in society are not compatible with the principle of freedom.

So the demand for substantive freedom stipulates the provision of substantive equality. This is turn calls for the reduction of vast socio-economic disparities. Those who wish to maintain these disparities—on the ground that the rich have accumulated their riches by 'just' means—try to hide the true relation between liberty, equality and justice. The principle of equality demands a radical change in those social arrangements which enable one section of society to gain undue control over the life of others.

R.H. Tawney (1880-1962), Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) and C.B. Macpherson (1911-87) regard liberty and equality as complementary principles.

IDEA OF EQUALITY AS IMPEDIMENT TO LIBERTY

Some thinkers have envisaged certain situations where the provision of equality obstructs the enjoyment of liberty. French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59), in his celebrated work *Democracy in America* (1835-40), observed that the 'principle of equality', whereby all distinctions of social status are gradually eroded, was the ruling principle of modern history. The principle of equality in this sense encouraged individual's subservience to public opinion and the extension and centralization of state power. With the extension of democracy in the social sphere, the source of intellectual authority was found in public opinion and this led to the 'tyranny of majority'. Supremacy of public opinion demanded conformity to generally held attitudes and standards; it led to believe that a dissenting position must be a wrong one. The net result was the curtailment of individual autonomy and the loss of liberty. In other words, whereas the principle of liberty demands the encouragement of a variety of interests and opinions, the principle of equality tends to promote conformity of opinions and attitudes; hence the antithesis between liberty and equality.

Lord Acton (1834-1902), British historian, who was deeply influenced by Tocqueville, similarly argued during the nineteenth century that in the modern times, liberty was endangered by the rival doctrine of equality with its tendency to erode independent centres of power and to promote authority of the state. Thus Tocqueville and Acton were chiefly concerned with the conflict between liberty and equality in the political sphere, that is in the sphere of use of authority, and they sought to resolve this dilemma through decentralization of power, particularly by vesting adequate power in the intermediate voluntary associations. Tocqueville

saw free political parties and free press as suitable instruments for safeguarding individual liberty.

In fact, Tocqueville was not against equality as such. He only warned that the demand for equality in the sphere of freedom of opinion should not be pressed to such extent that it results in the suppression of freedom. John Stuart Mill (1806-73), English philosopher, was so impressed by this argument that he held that if the opinion of a single individual was different from the rest of society, that society had no right to silence him.

Some writers tend to oppose equality in the economic sphere in the name of safeguarding individual's liberty. Thus Isaiah Berlin (1909-97), British thinker, in his famous essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958), argued that the state could only protect negative liberty of individual which consists in not being prevented by other individuals from attaining his goal. On the other hand, positive liberty treats individual his own master. It belongs to his own will and capacity which is beyond the scope of the state. If one cannot fly like an eagle or swim like a whale, one is by no means deprived of political liberty on this count. Similarly, if a man is too poor to afford something on which there is no legal ban—a loaf of bread, a journey round the world, recourse to law-courts—he cannot complain that he has been deprived of political liberty.

Thus Berlin, sought to equate socio-economic inequalities with natural and moral inequalities, and thereby projected a distorted view of equality. He ignored the fact that natural inequalities are unalterable while socio-economic inequalities are the product of social conditions which can be altered to meet the demands of justice. By divorcing liberty from equality, Berlin has done a great damage to the case for liberty itself.

Then F.A. Hayek (1899-1992), Austrian thinker, in his *Constitution of Liberty* (1960), argued that individual differences in skills and abilities under the conditions of equality before the law result in inequalities of income and wealth. If we try to remove these inequalities by forcing an authoritarian rule, it is bound to destroy individual's freedom, Hayek values freedom as an instrument of social progress. He argues that while extending the scope of freedom, we should not ask how many persons will be benefited by it, but how much progress will be made possible. We should not divide the 'cake of freedom.' to ensure 'equal shares for all', but according to each individual's potential to secure social progress. In his view, it is better that some should be free than none, and that many should have full freedom than all should have limited freedom. In other words, let late-running trains get late further if other trains could be run on time.

Hayek's message is clear: Let us strive for achieving high levels of excellence in the chosen few rather than marginal improvement in the majority of mediocres. In his view, the question of social justice should not come in the way of individual prosperity. In his later work *Law, Legislation and Liberty,* Vol. 2 (1976), Hayek declared social justice to be a 'mirage', hence an unrealizable principle. Liberty alone is the principle worth pursuing. Hayek wants to solve the problem of individual liberty within the market system, although he conceded that the state

should provide for some public services outside the market system. But he has not made it clear as to wherefrom these services will be provided without diverting some resources from the market system. By divorcing liberty from social justice, Hayek has undermined the foundations of liberty itself.

CONCLUSION

Liberty and equality comprise the foundations of a just social order. Conflict between the two arises only from their biased interpretations. In economic sphere, if equality is interpreted as 'identity of treatment', or 'equal shares for all' disregarding merit and need, it not only destroys liberty but makes a mockery of equality itself. As Harold J. Laski *(A Grammar of Politics;* 1938) has observed:

> Equality does not mean identity of treatment. There can be no ultimate identity of treatment so long as men are different in want and capacity and need. The purpose of society would be frustrated at the outset if the nature of a mathematician met an identical response with that to the nature of a bricklayer.

It is significant that in the legal-political sphere, the reconciliation of the principles of liberty and equality is not at all difficult. But their relation in the socio-economic sphere is certainly more complicated and capable of conflicting interpretations. Even legal and political equality may be rendered ineffective due to socio-economic inequality. Thus, *so long as we do not step into the thorny field of socio-economic life, liberty and equality go together very well.* In the historical perspective, the cry for liberty was greatly supported by the idea of equality. As Laski has brilliantly expressed:

> The power, in fact, of the ideal of equality lies in the historical evidence that so far in the record of the State the wills of men have been unequally answered. Their freedom, where it has been gained, has accordingly been built upon the unfreedom of others. Inequality, in a word, means the rule of limited numbers because it secures freedom only to those whose will is secure of respect. They will dominate the State and use its power for their own purposes. They will make the fulfilment of their private desires the criterion of public good *(ibid.).*

In other words, the demand for liberty implied the abolition of special privileges of certain groups, hence equality of all citizens, in the legal as well as the political sphere.

But coming to the socio-economic sphere, some champions of liberty would contest the idea of equality. They argue that liberty enables man to acquire unlimited wealth, prestige and power, while equality seeks to limit such opportunity. It discourages initiative and enterprise, stunts potentialities of men and robs society of its valuable assets. Such thinkers deprecate equality as the antithesis of liberty and the road-block to social progress. Still others argue that equality in the economic sphere should be restricted to the provision of a minimum subsistence level for each individual so that the more enterprising, talented and energetic are not deprived of their liberty to prove their excellence and get suitable reward and

encouragement. Now, this stand is not very strongly contested by the champions of equality who concede that equality postulates the equality of opportunity, not the equality of outcome; fair shares, not equal shares.

Differential treatment and differential rewards to different persons according to the value of the service rendered by them to society, therefore, do not contravene the principle of equality, nor of liberty. But if this argument is stretched too far, it would become untenable. Those who argue that the state has nothing to do with the existing socio-economic inequalities or that the demand for equality should not be allowed to stand in the way of a purely competitive system, are stretching the principle of liberty too far. They lead to drastic and disastrous conclusions for humanity.

VIII
EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

When we consider the relation between equality and justice, different interpretations of these principles would lead to different conclusions. Aristotle had said that justice consists in 'treating equals equally and unequals unequally'. So before deciding the course of justice in a given situation, we should first ascertain as to who are equals and unequals. Aristotle warned that those who are equal in one respect, are inclined to believe that they should be equal in all respects. For example, those who are equal as citizens of a state, may think that they are entitled to equal wealth, prestige and power. When they fail to gain these privileges, they have a feeling of deprivation or the sense of injustice which eventually results in a rebellion. This feeling should not be encouraged in order to maintain peace in society. So the state should not promote the idea of equality.

In the present-day society, those who wish to maintain the prevailing inequalities of wealth, prestige and power, seek to repeat Aristotle's argument in the name of justice. They warn that people should not insist on a radical change in the existing order in order to maintain justice in society. Thus F.A. Hayek (1899-1992), Austrian philosopher, in his *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, Vol. 2: *The Mirage of Social Justice* (1976), argued that the idea of social justice is baseless. Justice is, in fact, a characteristic of human conduct; a society cannot be just or unjust. If liberty is curtailed in the interest of equality, it would lead to widespread tension and dispute on the question of unjust distribution of life's goods. Pursuit of justice is a matter of procedure; its objective is to promote freedom. It should provide for maximum opportunity to each individual to serve his self-interest according to his own knowledge and wisdom.

> Justice is a name to which every knee will bow. Equality is a word which many fear and detest.
>
> L.T. Hobhouse (*The Elements of Social Justice*; 1922)

On closer analysis, we find that Hayek invokes the idea of justice in order

to vindicate a competitive society model which eulogizes the stronger and the resourceful. He deprecates equality because the idea of equality is intended to give relief to the weaker and the deprived. However, modern social consciousness does not concede the so-called dichotomy between equality and justice. It is now widely maintained that equality will be meaningful only when it is accompanied by a sense of justice. Broadly speaking, justice consists in rightful allocation of benefits and burdens. This condition must always be fulfilled while applying the principle of equality, whether we are dealing with formal equality or substantive equality. Let us take the case of a queue system which exemplifies formal equality. When we form a queue for getting a ticket, it gives us the benefit of having a ticket. In this process, we also bear the burden of waiting for our turn. Queue system is regarded as conducive to justice because it gives equality of opportunity to all candidates for the ticket 'without discrimination' on grounds of social or economic status, race, region, religion, etc. However, when we allow a separate queue for ladies or senior citizens, who are fewer in numbers, we seek to reduce their burden of waiting time. This is regarded to be just and rightful because we pay special regard to these categories of persons, and also want to help them. In doing so we enter the arena of substantive equality. In short, we always act with a sense of justice while applying the principle of equality.

If we forget the principle of justice, we might make a mockery of the principle of equality. For example, if a ruler chooses to shoot everyone of his subjects 'without discrimination', and to shoot himself in the end, he might claim to be following the 'rule of equality', but his decision would be termed crazy and inhuman because he would be acting without a sense of justice. Similarly, if a competent lawyer chooses to defend all clients 'without discrimination' between the wicked and the innocent, he would be making a mockery of equality because of his indifference to the dictates of justice.

Again, if somebody hits in my head, it is no consolation for me to be told that I have 'equal' power and liberty to hit him back in his head. I want equality for my 'security'—a positive benefit, and not for the ability of revenge which is at best a method of 'wild justice'. Equality without a genuine sense of justice loses its essence and becomes a source of oppression. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), English philosopher, postulated that the state of nature was a state of natural equality (*i.e.* when physical, mental and manipulative powers of each individual, taken together, were nearly equal), but there was no sense of security for anyone: life of man was 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. Then sovereign was established to keep everybody in awe, to enforce law and order throughout his jurisdiction, and to provide protection to people's life and property. We may infer from this argument that natural equality without a sense of justice is a bane, but when it is converted into legal equality informed by a sense of justice, it turns to be a boon. In a nutshell, in the sphere of practical application, the principle of equality is inseparable from the principle of justice.

IX
AMBEDKAR'S ANALYSIS OF INEQUALITY

> Unless you change your social order you can achieve little by way of progress.
> Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), brilliant Indian thinker and social critic, sought to analyse the problem of inequality in India — particularly in Hindu Society — with special reference to the glaring discrimination based on its caste system. This represents a typical case of social injustice. Ambedkar diagnosed its root cause in the widespread practice of Untouchability in Hindu society. This was the product of age-old caste system which was designed to protect the interests of high castes at the expense of the lowest caste. While Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) also dedicated his life to the eradication of Untouchability in India, Ambedkar differed from him in regard to the method of achieving this objective. Gandhi coined the word 'Harijans' (Children of God) to describe the 'Untouchables' in order to underline the value of their service to humanity and to develop a soft corner for them in the high castes. However, Ambedkar insisted on calling them 'Untouchables', 'the Depressed Classes' (*Dalits*) or 'the Scheduled Castes' to focus on their inherited social plight. He maintained that soothing names and soft palliatives will hardly serve any purpose : "They forgot that whitewashing does not save a dilapidated house. You must pull it down and build anew."

Untouchability

Untouchability refers to a widespread practice of orthodox Hindu society under which certain outcaste Hindus were treated as untouchable by the caste Hindus; their touch was believed to pollute the caste Hindus; they were refused entry into temples, and were not allowed to use common wells, ponds, inns and other common services.

Dr. Ambedkar dubbed the practice of Untouchability a kind of slavery with no responsibility for feeding the slaves. While Gandhiji wanted a peaceful and gradual abolition of Untouchability through precept and example, Dr. Ambedkar advocated the more radical solution through the annihilation of caste itself as an institution. In his powerful style of reasoning, he asserted:

> The root of Untouchability is the caste system; the root of the caste system is religion attached to '*varna*' and '*ashrama*' and the root of '*varnashrama*' is Brahminical religion; and the root of Brahminical religion is authoritarianism or political power
>
> (*Annihilation of Caste;* 1936).

Varnashrama	:	A combination of provisions concerning *Varna* and *Ashrama* under Hindu religion.
Varna	:	Division of Hindu society into four castes : *Brahmans* (the priests), *Kshatriyas* (the soldiers), *Vaishyas* (the traders) and *Shudras* (the manual workers).
Ashrama	:	Division of human life into four phases : *Brahmcharya* (celibacy and devotion to studies), *Grihastha* (maintaining a household), *Vanprastha* (living in forests after abandoning the household) and *Samnyasa* (renunciation of worldly life and living the life of an ascetic).

Like all radicals, Ambedkar refused to accept piecemeal process of social reform. He maintained :

> It is necessary to make a distinction between social reform in the sense of the reforms of the Hindu family and social reform in the sense of the reorganization and reconstruction of the Hindu society. The former has relation to widow remarriage, child marriage, etc. while the latter relates to the abolition of caste (*ibid.*).

Analysing the impact of caste system on Hindu society, Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that caste does not result in economic efficiency; caste cannot and has not improved the race. On the contrary, the caste system has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. Worse still, the effect of caste on the ethos of the Hindus was simply deplorable. It made them caste-bound. It killed public spirit and charity. Commenting on the disastrous consequences of the caste system on the Hindu society, Ambedkar pointed out :

> A Hindu's public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving; there is no appreciation of the meritorious; there is no charity to the needy (*ibid.*).

If India was to become a modern nation, there was no way to accomplish this task except through the annihilation of caste. Thus Ambedkar observed:

> You cannot build anything on the foundations of caste. You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up a morality. Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole(*ibid.*).

In order to bring about a radical change in Hindu social order and to abolish the caste system, Ambedkar recommended inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, a scientific and a rational attitude towards religion. He wanted to replace the formal religion by the true religion, to replace the 'Religion of Rules' by the 'Religion of Principles'.

Dr. Ambedkar exhorted the Untouchables to make sincere efforts for their own amelioration and also wanted the Government to play a positive role in this process. In short, he recommended five important steps in this direction :

(*a*) The Untouchables should dissociate themselves from the traditional bonds of untouchable status. They should refuse to do traditional untouchable work, such as dragging of dead cattle out of the village, and also stop drinking bad liquor and eating beef which was the symbol of their untouchable status;

(*b*) The Untouchables should try to restore their self-respect and pride. They should become educated and professionally qualified. They should shed their inferiority complex; migrate to larger towns and cities where professional status instead of inborn status is largely respected, take up modern professions and transform themselves to fit into the modern civilization;

(*c*) The Untouchables should be represented at all levels of Government by their own representatives. Ambedkar was convinced that the leadership of the Untouchables should emerge from the Untouchables themselves;

(*d*) The Government should take responsibility for the welfare of all its people, creating special rights for those to whom society had denied education and occupational opportunities. The Untouchables should have recourse to legal channels for the protection of their rights; and finally,

(*e*) All forms of caste must be abolished. The functions of the Brahmins as priests on various ceremonies should be performed by trained persons from any caste, under State supervision. This would amount not only to the abolition of traditional discrimination between high and low castes but make the caste system itself redundant. Functions of each member of society will then be redefined on a rational basis, corresponding to each individual's qualifications and training.

In a nutsell, Dr. Ambedkar sought to establish social justice through replacement of the caste system by a rational and functional social organization.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Dr. Ambedkar was right that the Untouchables should try to develop their leadership from among themselves instead of relying on other castes for their emancipation. But somehow this suggestion has been interpreted to mean that they should disown all social reformers and their well-wishers who come from other castes. Can they ignore the role played by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83) and Swami Vivekanand (1863-1920) for their emancipation? Some *Dalit* leaders are even inclined to ridicule the role played by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) in seeking their emancipation. Such people even despise the works of art and literature which deal with their problems, which try to arouse social consciousness about these problems, and which inspire others to work for their emancipation unless such works are produced by *Dalits* themselves! This attitude is indicative of a very narrow outlook which is not based on reason.

Coming to the role of Mahatma Gandhi in the eradication of Untouchability and the emancipation of Untouchables, no sane person will doubt or dispute Gandhi's sincerity in this matter although some of his methods might be questioned. Gandhi

stood for the removal of Untouchability on moral and humanist grounds. He made some very pertinent points on this issue.

In the first place, Gandhi argued that Untouchability is not sanctioned by Hindu religion. It crept into Hindu thought at the time of moral downfall of Hinduism. Gandhi strongly repudiated the stand of those orthodox Hindus who held that the practice of Untouchability conformed to the dictates of their religion.

Secondly, Gandhi argued that those who performed dirty jobs became dirty only bodily for the time being, like any other human being who becomes dirty in his day-to-day activities. The so-called Untouchables, like other human beings, also become normal when they have cleaned themselves and their clothes. There is no rational ground for considering them to be permanently dirty or Untouchable, not to speak of treating their descendents also Untouchable!

Finally, there is no justification for considering any social groups as higher or lower on the basis of the functions performed by them which are equally essential for the maintenance of society. Respect of a person in society should correspond to the value of the function performed by him in the service of society. If at all we wish to accord differential treatment to those responsible for our sanitary services, then we should treat them with more respect and a sense of gratitude. We show greater respect to our mothers because they performed sanitary services for us during our infancy. We are grateful to nurses and doctors who take care of us during our illness when we are dirty; they have to touch dirty things in order to cure us. Then why not show similar respect and gratitude to those who perform sanitary services for us throughout our life.

Gandhi's moral arguments and prescriptions in this behalf are matchless. However, some of Gandhi's beliefs might stand in the way of emancipation of the Untouchables in actual practice. Ambedkar was right that the roots of Untouchability lie in the caste system of Hindu society; so eradication of Untouchability can be secured by the annihilation of the caste system itself. The curse of caste system is so all-pervading that even the Untouchables consider some castes or sub-castes as Untouchable among themselves. Gandhi hoped to evolve a classless society within the caste system by preaching the gospel of 'dignity of labour'. Gandhi was not prepared to abandon the rule of *Varnashrama* because in his view, it was the very foundation of Hinduism. Gandhi even expressed his approval to the continuance of the caste system. As he wrote:

> Historically speaking, caste may be regarded as man's experiment for social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a leaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration born of avarice and greed
>
> (*Young India* : 1921).

However, Gandhi contended that the caste system should not be allowed to become a source of harbouring inequalities in society. As he observed in *Young India* (1931):

I have frequently said that I do not believe in caste in the modern sense ...

Nor do I believe in inequalities between human beings. We are all absolutely equal. But equality is of soul and not bodies. Hence it is a mental state ... Assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man. Thus caste, in so far as it connotes distinctions in status, is an evil.

Gandhi believed that the original provision of *Varna*, that is the occupation-wise division of society into four parts under Hinduism was quite beneficial. It was distorted into modern caste system involving certain unreasonable restrictions. So Gandhi continued:

> I do, however, believe in *Varna* which is based on hereditary occupations ... When Hindus were seized with inertia, abuse of *Varna* resulted in innumerable castes, with unnecessary and harmful restrictions as to inter-marriage and inter-dining. The law of *Varna* has nothing to do with these restrictions. People of different *Varnas* may inter-marry and inter-dine. These restrictions may be necessary in the interest of chastity and hygiene. But a *Brahmana* who marries a *Shudra* girl, or *vice versa* commits no offence against the law of *Varna*.

Gandhi argued that the removal of Untouchability does not require the destruction of caste system itself. On the contrary, the removal of Untouchability would purify the caste system itself. So he wrote in *Harijan* (1933):

> It is wrong to destroy caste because of the outcaste, as it would destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it or of a crop because of the weeds. Untouchability is the product ... not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it ... The moment Untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified.

This view was diametrically opposite to that held by Ambedkar and Periar (1879-1973), the undisputed leader of the Untouchables in South India. They argued that Untouchability was the product of the caste system and that it could not be eradicated until the caste system itself was destroyed. So they severely criticized Gandhi's stand on this issue. It is true that the caste system cannot be abolished with a stroke of pen. Caste has become a fetish with all Hindus. It has even engulfed Indian Muslims, Sikhs and Christians who are otherwise egalitarian societies. In today's scenario, many of those who belong to Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes are so obsessed with caste that they tend to show that their caste is superior to some other castes!

> My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words : liberty, equality and fraternity. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master The Buddha .... I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches '*Prajna*' (understanding) as against superstition and supernaturalism, '*Karuna*' (love) and '*Samata*' (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life.
>
> Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
>
> (*Karuna* = love + compassion)

Comparative Study of Gandhi and Ambedkar on Emancipation of the Untouchables

The Issue	*Gandhi's View*	*Ambedkar's View*
Description of the Untouchables	*Harijans* (Men of God)	Untouchables; Depressed Classes; Scheduled Castes
Attitude toward Religion	Fountain of Morality; Must be followed faithfully	A device to perform certain social functions like solemnization of marriages, performance of funeral rites, etc.; Procedure for social functions can be redefined on logical basis; Religion of Rules should be replaced by Religion of Principles
Attitude toward Caste System	It is an integral part of Hinduism; it should be retained but its rigidity should be removed	It is the source of social injustice; Annihilation of Caste is the only way to restore social justice
Attitude toward Modern Civilization	Industrialization and Urbanization lead to moral decline; these should be stopped forthwith	Modernization is a liberating force; the Untouchables should make full use of the opportunities opened up by the Modern Civilization; They should shift to towns and cities, get modern education and take up modern professions
Programme for the Emancipation of the Untouchables	Gradual Social Reform; Persuade Hindu society to accept dignity of labour, and to fraternize the Untouchables	Untouchables to shed inferiority complex, challenge irrational beliefs, avail themselves of the Government-sponsored welfare programmes, take advantage of reservations, transform themselves through modern education and taking up modern professions, rely on legal channels for protection of their rights

Caste system can be diluted to some extent by increased industrialization and urbanization and diversification of professions. Ambedkar was aware of this, and he exhorted the untouchables to take advantage of the developments on this front. But Gandhi was dead against industrialization, urbanization

and diversification of professions. So he relied only on moral weapon for the eradication of Untouchability. But in practice this weapon does not prove to be very efficient. Gandhi wanted to set up autonomous village republics throughout India. Both Nehru (1889-1964) and Ambedkar realized that village was a den of narrow-minded people and that no real progress could be made in an intellectually and culturally backward environment of villages. Ambedkar particularly advised the Untouchables to migrate to larger towns and cities, and to take up modem professions, which will determine their new status on rational basis, and not on the accident of birth.

Caste system in India could be abolished only under Buddhism which established its separate identity from Hinduism. That is why Ambedkar himself embraced Buddhism and inspired his followers to adopt Buddhism in order to get rid of the stigma of Untouchability. It is said that the Dalit icon switched to Buddhism so that the link with the country is not severed.

Finally, as the time has shown, the liberation of one-fifth of Indian population from dirty jobs is becoming possible, although slowly, by the development and introduction of new technology in the field of sanitary services. And Gandhi was in principle against new technology! That is why his prescriptions are sometimes not found to be worth accepting. The solution lies in combining Gandhi's moral arguments with Ambedkar's pragmatic approach for the positive removal of the curse of Untouchability.

Q. 1. What is equality? Elucidate the idea of equality with reference to the concepts of foundational equality and distributive equality.

2. Show how the principle of equality concedes the rational grounds of discrimination. In this connection examine the debate on reverse discrimination.

3. Distinguish between formal equality and substantive equality indicating the various spheres of their application in social life.

4. Examine the relation between the principles of liberty and equality. Can you conceptualize the model of a society where these two principles would converge?

5. Write short, critical notes on : (*a*) Simple and Complex Equality; and (*b*) Equality and Justice.

6. Bring out Ambedkar's diagnosis and remedy of the problem of social inequality in India. Contrast it with Gandhian view.

8

Concept of Justice

> Justice being taken away... what are kingdoms but great robberies? For what are robberies themselves but little kingdoms!
>
> Saint Augustine (354-430)

> If justice and righteousness perish, human life would no longer have any value in the world.
>
> Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

I
NATURE AND SCOPE OF JUSTICE

The term 'justice' implies the quality of being 'just', right' or 'reasonable'. It is opposed to what is 'unjust', 'wrong' or 'unreasonable'. It embodies an ideal which is akin to the 'absolute truth' yet it is a dynamic idea because our realization of that ideal and our comprehension of that absolute truth is a continuous process. Our progress in this direction depends upon the development of our social consciousness, so that what was regarded as just some centuries ago is not so regarded today. Slavery and serfdom were widely 'justified' in ancient and medieval Europe; untouchability was 'justified' in India till a few decades ago; the inferior status of women was taken for granted all over the world not so long ago; racial discrimination was 'justified' till recently in some parts of the world. But these conditions are now widely regarded as unjust. Our changing outlook about these problems and changing public opinion in favour of human liberty and equality are ample proof of the dynamic character of the idea of justice.

Political thinkers since earliest times have been trying to formulate the concept of justice. However, with the dawn of modern consciousness, especially under the influence of the principles of democracy and socialism, this concept has been thoroughly transformed. As a result, the traditional view of justice has given way to the concept of social justice. In a nutshell, *the problem of justice in*

the contemporary world is concerned with determining logical criteria for the allocation of goods, services, opportunities, benefits, power and honours as well as obligations in society, particularly in a scarcity situation. In other words, justice is concerned with the allocation of benefits as well as burdens.

SPHERE OF APPLICATION

Justice is primarily a problem of moral philosophy. But since it has to be implemented by a political order, it also becomes a problem of political philosophy. Here it is important to note that the quest for justice will not be relevant in a purely authoritarian, purely competitive or purely communist regime. In a purely authoritarian system—whether it belongs to the traditional type or modern type—all allocation is made according to the dictates of an established authority. Hence there is no use of search for the new criteria of allocation. Then in a purely competitive system, all allocation is decided by the free play of market forces; hence there is no scope of applying any new criteria of allocation. Finally, in a hypothetical communist system where the rule of 'allocation according to need' is supposed to be applied, it will be futile to consider any alternative principles of justice. If everybody's needs could be met, the problem of injustice in society would automatically disappear.

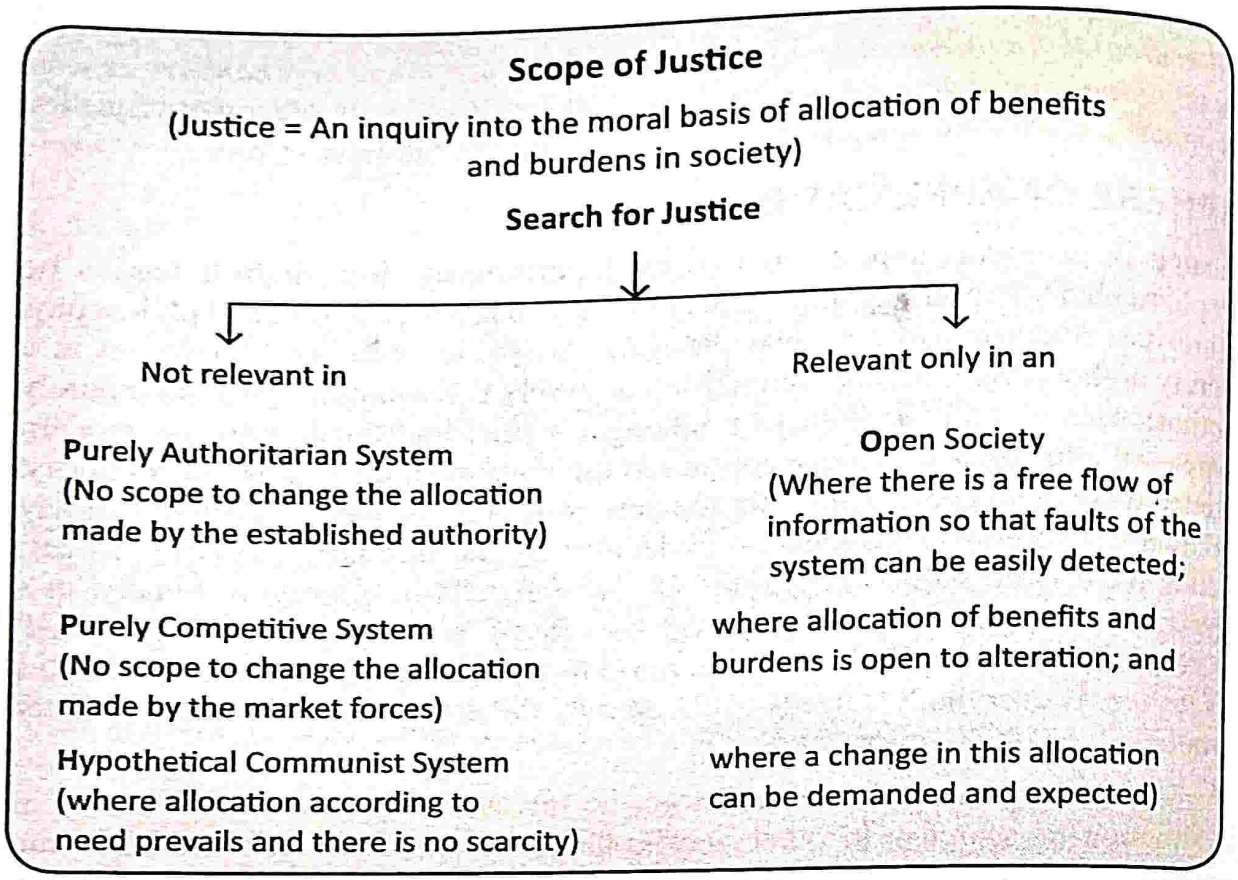
Search for justice would, therefore, be relevant only in an open society in a situation of scarcity. In other words, the question of justice would become significant in a situation where there is a widespread demand of social advantages that are in short supply, and where the criteria of allocation of these advantages can be openly discussed and adopted. Moreover, these criteria should be determined in such a manner that they prove to be acceptable to all individuals or categories of the individuals concerned. However, it may be conceded that there can be no final word in this behalf. Hence suitable channels of appeal and even of protest should be provided within the system so that the prevalent criteria could be revised as and when so warranted by reason.

Authoritarian System

Authoritarian system refers to a system of social organization where everything is required to conform to an established order, and it is regulated by the person or group which is recognized as the guardian of that order.

Open Society

Open society refers to a social and political system where there is a free flow of information regarding public affairs and matters of public importance. Public policy in such a system represents a reconciliation of diverse interests. Power-holders under this system do not claim that they have found the truth. Hence, it encourages freedom of expression among citizens and shows readiness to adopt new ideas. It permits the citizens to criticize the prevalent order and to seek restructuring of the existing situation by attaining public support for the proposed changes.


Scope of Justice
(Justice = An inquiry into the moral basis of allocation of benefits and burdens in society)
Search for Justice
Not relevant in
Purely Authoritarian System
(No scope to change the allocation made by the established authority)
Purely Competitive System
(No scope to change the allocation made by the market forces)
Hypothetical Communist System
(where allocation according to need prevails and there is no scarcity)
Relevant only in an
Open Society
(Where there is a free flow of information so that faults of the system can be easily detected;
where allocation of benefits and burdens is open to alteration; and
where a change in this allocation can be demanded and expected)

II
CLASSICAL THEORIES OF JUSTICE

PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

It is obvious to us that the modem concept of justice is different from its traditional concept. The traditional concept of justice focused on the 'just man'. It was primarily concerned with the virtues befitting a man for enhancing his moral worth. It consisted in the performance of his duties attached to his status determined by the prevalent law, social customs and mode of thought. A typical example of the traditional approach to the problem of justice is provided by Plato's theory of justice which sought to prescribe the duties of different citizens and required them to develop virtues befitting those duties. As Richard Lewis Nettleship, in his *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (1962), has elucidated :

> Justice, in Plato's sense, is the power of individual concentration on duty. If a soldier is just in this sense, he is, of course, a brave man; if a man in subordinate position is just, he, of course, accepts and maintains authority, or is 'self-controlled'. Justice therefore...is really the condition of the existence of all the virtues; each of them is a particular manifestation of the spirit of justice, which takes different forms according to a man's function in the community. In modern phrase it is equivalent to sense of duty.

Plato prescribes different duties for different groups of citizens whose fulfilment

would be instrumental in building up a just social order. Justice results from each element in society doing its appropriate task, doing it well and doing it only. In order to achieve perfect harmony which symbolizes justice, it is imperative that reason must rule within the man as well as within the state. So, in a just or ideal state, the reins of government shall remain in the hands of a class of philosopher-kings who are supposed to be the living embodiments of reason, whereas material production and military defence shall be entrusted to the producer and warrior classes respectively. Thus in Plato's perfect state:

> the industrial forces would produce but they would not rule; the military forces would protect but they would not rule; the forces of knowledge and science and philosophy would be nourished and protected and they would rule (Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* ; 1954).

Plato enumerated four cardinal virtues. Of these, the first three were the befitting virtues for each social class whereas justice was the befitting virtue of the social order, as shown in the following chart:

Plato's Theory of Justice

Social Class	*Dominant Trait*	*Befitting Virtue*
Philosophers	Knowledge	Wisdom
Soldiers	Emotion	Courage
Traders	Appetite	Temperence
Virtue befitting the social order		Justice

It is significant that the ideal form of Hindu caste system, as enunciated by the ancient law-givers, strikes a similar note regarding the nature of *dharma* which is equivalent of justice. However, degeneration of Hindu caste system reduced it to an epitome of injustice.

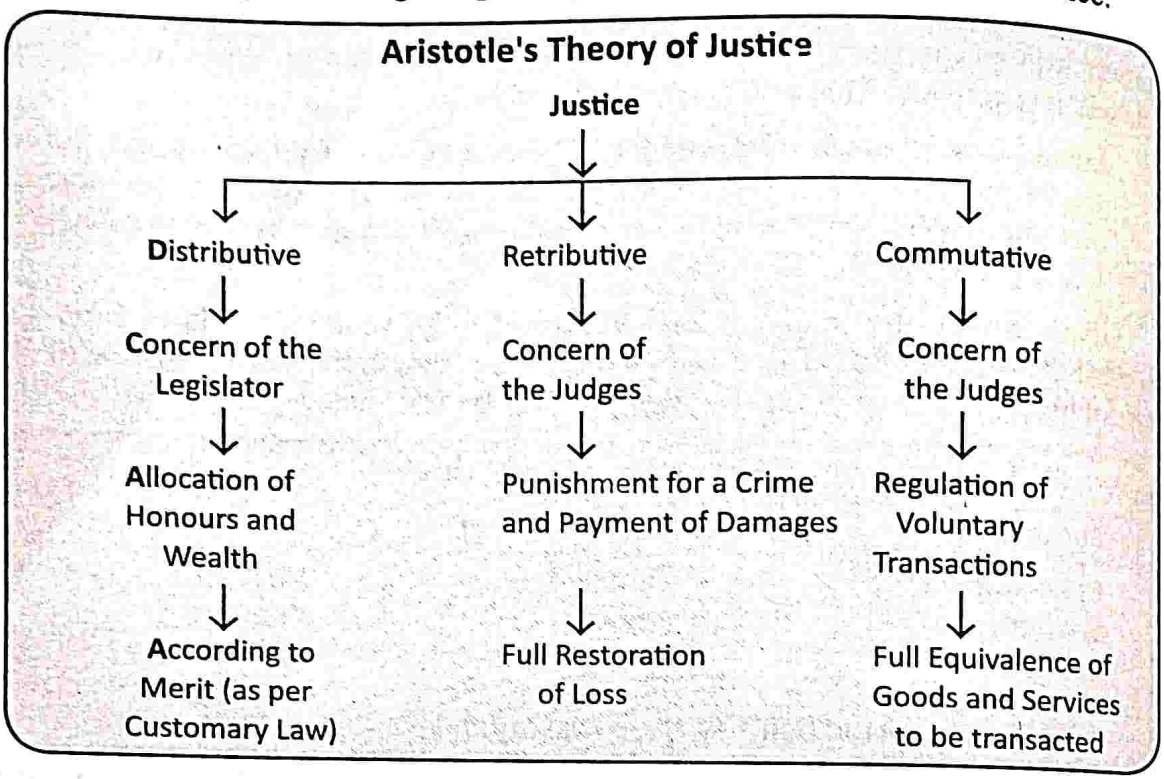
ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

While Plato's theory of justice represents the radical view in that it sought to change the existing social order of his times, Aristotle's theory of justice embodies the conservative view as he was in favour of maintaining the existing order. In Aristotle's view, justice was concerned with the regulation of human relations. He held that the identical notion of justice in the minds of people was responsible for binding them together, and this was the reason behind the existence of the state.

Aristotle identified three types of justice: (*a*) Distributive Justice; (*b*) Retributive (also called Corrective, Rectificatory or Remedial) Justice; and (*c*) Commutative Justice. The legislator should be concerned with distributive justice whereas the judge should be concerned with retributive and commutative justice. Distributive justice deals with the allocation of honours and wealth. Its basic principle is 'treating equals equally and unequals unequally'. Aristotle preferred to rely on the prevailing custom and customary law for deciding as to who were equals or unequals.

Retributive justice deals with imposition of punishment and payment of

damages. It requires full restoration of any loss involuntarily sustained in the course of transactions between individual members of the community. Finally, commutative justice seeks to determine the amount of one sort of goods or services to be rendered in return for another sort in voluntary transaction of buying and selling, or letting and hiring. Its guiding principle should be full equivalence.


Aristotle's Theory of Justice
Justice
Distributive
Retributive
Commutative
Concern of the Legislator
Concern of the Judges
Concern of the Judges
Allocation of Honours and Wealth
Punishment for a Crime and Payment of Damages
Regulation of Voluntary Transactions
According to Merit (as per Customary Law)
Full Restoration of Loss
Full Equivalence of Goods and Services to be transacted

III
MODERN VIEW OF JUSTICE

Whereas the traditional view of justice was largely conservative, the modern view of justice embodies a progressive idea. The traditional view insisted on the individual conforming to a pre-conceived image of society; the modern view of justice seeks to transform society itself for the realization of certain human values. To be sure, the traditional view of justice has given way to the modern idea of 'social justice'. D.D. Raphael, in his *Problems of Political Philosophy* (1976), has made an important point: "The term 'social justice' tends to issue from the mouths of reformers, and to be regarded with suspicion by those who are satisfied with the existing order."

Human Values

Human values refer to a set of moral principles and beliefs whose upholders pay due regard to human life, human personality, human feelings and human dignity while dealing with others. In this pursuit, considerations of material profit and loss are relegated to the background.

The idea of social justice comprises a force behind social change. It is precisely

when people find fault with the existing social order, involving oppressive and exploitative social conditions, that they raise the demand for social justice, seeking suitable changes in social policy for determining an 'authoritative allocation of values'. The ideas of liberty and equality derive their substance from the idea of social justice when these principles seek transformation of the existing social conditions to eliminate injustice in society. In a nutshell, *'social justice' is the voice of the oppressed and the underprivileged against the excesses of the social system*. It is an expression of what is due to the individual from society, especially to the individual who is condemned to a wretched and subhuman living because of a defective system of distribution of advantages accruing from the organized social life. The main problem of social justice is to decide an appropriate allocation of the advantages that are available or that can be secured through the instrumentality of the social organization.

When the modern idea of justice is applied to the various aspects of social life, we get legal, political and socio-economic notions of justice. These are by no means watertight compartments but constitute the closely connected components of the principle of justice.

LEGAL JUSTICE

The term 'legal justice' is broadly applied in two contexts: (*a*) 'justice according to law'—here we do not question the moral validity of law but focus on the principles of administration of justice according to the prevalent law; and (*b*) 'law according to justice'—here we examine the substance of law itself to ensure that it conforms to the requirements of justice.

Alf Ross, in his *On Law and Justice* (1958), argued that justice consists in an efficient administration of law and that it should not be tested on some imaginary moral values. As Morris Ginsberg, in his *On Justice in Society* (1965), has elucidated:

> Ross accepts what may be called the formal principles of justice as a basis of law. The notion of a legal order implies that decisions shall be made not arbitrarily but in accordance with general rules, and that these general rules (whatever they are) shall be correctly (that is what moralists call impartially) applied; that is by criteria defining the class of cases coming under the rule, and not affected by the subjective reactions of the judge. Justice then is conformity with existing law.

This view represents an outstanding example of the concept of legal justice as 'justice according to law'. It does not question whether a particular law itself is right or wrong, on the plea that there is no scientific way of such verification. According to this view, a good law is known by its efficiency in attaining its purpose, whatever that purpose might be. In this sense, the problem of justice has nothing to do with the purpose of law; it is solely concerned with the efficacy of law. Justice in totalitarian societies may be distorted not because of bad laws, but because of the power given to judges to disregard fixed rules.

On the other hand, Ernest Barker, in his *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (1951), has dwelled on the concept of legal justice as 'law according to

justice'. Barker draws a distinction between 'positive law' and 'natural law' to show that law derives its validity and value from two different sources. Positive law denotes a particular law—the law defined and declared by each community for its own members. On the other hand, natural law is a universal law—a law founded on what is right-in-itself, on what is just everywhere and at all times for all mankind, on what is valuable whether or not it be valid. Barker demonstrates that this distinction between the two aspects of law can be traced in the political theory of Aristotle, Roman jurisprudence as well as Christian doctrine. After a detailed examination of these theories, Barker comes to this conclusion:

> If we make this distinction, we may say that authority gives validity to law, and justice gives it value. A law has validity, and I am legally obliged to obey it, if it is declared, recognized, and enforced as law by the authority of the legally organized community, acting in its capacity of a State. A law has value, and I am bound to obey it not only legally, and not only by an outward compulsion, but also morally and by an inward force, if it has the inherent quality of justice *(Principles of Social and Political Theory;* 1951).

Barker points out that, ideally, law ought to have both validity and value. Thus, law will be most effective if it conforms to the principle of justice and also has the authority of the state.

Of the two views of legal justice, one represented by Ross and the other by Barker, the latter is definitely more sound. Justice in the legal sphere consists not only in an efficient administration of law, but it postulates that law itself should embody human values according to the prevailing social consciousness. If law does not reflect the changing social values, it will turn out to be a dead weight on the wheels of social progress, only to be discarded in a violent overthrow.

POLITICAL JUSTICE

The term 'political justice' is sometimes applied in a comprehensive sense so as to embrace the restructuring of the entire fabric of socio-economic and political relations. For instance, William Godwin, in his *Essay on Property* (1793), used the term 'political justice' to denote a moral principle whose object was the 'general good' and which was especially invoked to evolve a genuine system of property. Otto Kirchheimer, in his *Political Justice: The Use of Legal Procedure for Political Ends* (1961), has conceived of 'political justice' as 'the search for an ideal in which all members will communicate and interact with the body-politic to assume its highest perfection'.

A more specific usage of the term 'political justice', however, refers to the transformation of political institutions, political processes and political rights according to the current conceptions of justice. This means, in the first place, the establishment of democratic institutions in the political life of the community so that these institutions represent and take care of the interests of the people, not of any privileged class. Thus, representative institutions—the legislature and executive—should be constituted on the principle of universal adult franchise, while independence of the judiciary should be protected and maintained. This also implies 'rule of law', *i.e.* the principle that government should not be arbitrary,

but should be conducted through procedures authorized by legislation passed in the proper form. A constitutional government is also an essential ingredient of political justice in this sense.

Constitutional Government

Constitutional government refers to a form of government in which powers of governance (legislative, executive and judicial powers) are exercised by those who are appointed through the prescribed procedure, in a prescribed manner and under regular legal and political restraints provided by a Constitution. A constitution in this context denotes a set rules, procedures, practices and conventions which prescribe structures, functions, powers and responsibilities of different organs of government; the procedure of their formation, working and dissolution; relation between the state and its citizens, etc.

In the second place, political justice implies a full guarantee of the liberty of thought and expression, especially the right to criticize government and its policies. Finally, there should be complete freedom for forming associations and interest groups to enable the citizens to articulate their collective interests through the normal channels of communication and through political parties as well as to express their approval or disapproval of particular measures, to organize peaceful protests against harmful measures, and to pressurize the working of the government through democratic channels and procedures. In a nutshell, political justice postulates the universal availability of the mechanism for resolving the conflicting claims of their diverse interests.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The term 'socio-economic justice' comprehends two important elements: 'social justice' and 'economic justice'. Their combination into 'socio-economic justice' is significant because social life of the community cannot be transformed according to the principle of justice unless its economic relations are suitably transformed. The term 'economic justice' may be used in the restricted sense of reordering human relations in the economic sphere, *e.g.* relations between employer and worker, between trader and consumer, between landlord and tenant, between money-lender and borrower, etc. so as to eliminate exploitation of the vulnerable sections of society. On the other hand, the term 'social justice' is used more comprehensively so as to include economic justice as also to restore the dignity of human beings who have lost it due to a lower economic, educational and cultural status.

When we speak of 'economic growth with social justice', the term social justice suggests that the benefits of economic growth—which are largely economic in nature—should accrue to larger and larger sections, especially to the lower strata of society. The term socio-economic justice, or social justice, in a broad sense, comprehends the reallocation of both material and moral advantages of social life. It refers to a progressive concept and a model of development. The Indian Constitution (1950), particularly in its Preamble and the part dealing with the Directive Principles of State Policy, holds the promise of justice—social, economic and political. In common parlance, the term 'social justice' is usually

applied to comprehend all the three aspects of justice in society—social, economic and political. Of these, the economic aspect is most crucial because economic disparities and injustice are bound to erode the foundations of legal and political justice.

In a nutshell, *the term social justice, in the wider sense, implies a reordering of social life in such a manner that the material and moral benefits of social effort are not cornered by a tiny privileged class but accrue to the masses to ensure the uplift of the lower, weaker and underprivileged sections*. This involves a logical synthesis of liberty, equality and fraternity in their substantive aspects so that: (*a*) Liberty of thought and expression, etc. is supplemented by a democratic electoral system free from the decisive influence of money and manipulative power; (*b*) Formal equality is not rendered ineffective due to vast economic disparities, especially in the field of seeking justice in the law-courts and availing of educational and career development opportunities; (*c*) Special safeguards for minorities and weaker sections are provided in order to raise their dignity and promote the spirit of fraternity; and (*d*) The right to property is subordinated to the common good and the pattern of production of goods and services tends to subserve the social needs.

IV
PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE JUSTICE

Contemporary debate on the nature of justice pays special attention to the distinction between procedural justice and substantive justice (also called social justice or distributive justice). Champions of procedural justice hold that it is necessary to determine a just procedure for the allocation of social advantages, *viz.* goods and services, opportunities and benefits, power and honours; then its outcome will automatically be accepted as just. In other words, the allocation resulting from a just procedure must be treated as just. On the contrary, champions of substantive justice argue that the allocation or distribution of social goods and services, etc. among various sections of society itself should be just—that is the primary issue; the procedure for making such allocation is a secondary issue, which can be adjusted suitably to meet the requirements of just distribution.

The notion of procedural justice is closely related to the tradition of liberalism. According to this viewpoint, the function of justice is to regulate the mutual relations between individuals and groups. Hence, the quest for justice should aim at evolving reasonable rules which should be applied impartially to all categories. Freedom of contract is the mainstay of procedural justice. It requires the state to ensure that no individual or group would oppress another by force or fraud. Using the analogy of race, champions of procedural justice insist on laying down rules of the game; it hardly matters as to who wins or loses in the race. As Norman Barry (*An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*; 1989) has aptly illustrated: "Procedural justice is exemplified in competitions, such as races. A fair race is not one in which the person who wins morally deserves to win but one in which there

is no cheating, nobody jumps the gun or has an unfair advantage through the use of drugs." Accordingly procedural justice treats the rules of market economy as the model rules of human behaviour. It holds that the market mechanism creates necessary conditions for the most efficient use of resources; any artificial social policy designed to disturb this process will lead to the wastage of the rare material and human resources. The exponents of procedural justice include Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), FA. Hayek (1899-1992), Milton Friedman (1912-2006) and Robert Nozick (1938-2002). Besides, John Rawls (1921-2002) has sought to achieve the goal of substantive justice or social justice through the methodology of procedural justice.

Liberalism

Liberalism refers to a principle of politics which regards 'liberty' of 'freedom' of the individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. Liberty, in this sense, implies 'liberation' from restraints, particularly from the restraints imposed by a tradition-bound society like a feudal state, or by an authoritarian regime. This principle was evolved in the West in late-seventeenth century in order to liquidate feudal privileges of the land-owning class and to create favourable conditions for the new entrepreneurial class to enable them to contribute to social progress.

Procedural justice rules out all discrimination between human beings on grounds of caste, creed, sex, race, region, language and culture, etc. and accepts equal dignity and moral worth of all human beings. In this respect, it is a progressive idea. But it stretches the principle of open competition too far. Thus, Spencer went to the extent of suggesting that the state should not extend any help to the handicapped and let the weakest go to the wall. Spencer argued that if the state gives any support to the incapable, the imprudent and the weak, it would amount to depriving the capable, the prudent and the strong of their genuine share, and thereby impeding social progress. Spencer's social philosophy implies applying Darwin's principle of 'natural selection' and 'survival of the fittest' to the realm of human relations. It obliterates the distinction between rules of the animal world and those of civil society. Hayek suggested that the state should positively promote competition and ensure that the market is not reduced to an instrument of distributive justice, Friedman eulogized competitive capitalism as an essential condition of freedom and deprecated the various measures of human welfare and social security. Nozick contended that the state has no authority to redistribute the property of its citizens who were originally its clients. C.B. Macpherson (1911-87) has rightly pointed out that the free market society destroys the creative freedom of human beings who are constrained to employ their talents, skills and energies to cater to the needs of the market place instead of pursuing their self-appointed goals. Where is the scope of justice under such conditions of constraint?

In contrast, the idea of substantive justice corresponds to the philosophy of socialism. It holds that the test of justice in society consists in ascertaining whether the poor and the underprivileged have adequate opportunity to improve their lot. It demands that the opportunities of self-development should be progressively extended to the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of society.

Socialism

Socialism refers to a principle of politics which favours social ownership and control of the means of social production so that all able-bodied persons could be suitably employed in productive work, and all means of social production could be deployed for the fulfilment of social needs.

V
RETRIBUTIVE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Aristotle had defined retributive and distributive justice in consonance with his conservative outlook. In modern times, these aspects of justice must be defined in terms of modern social consciousness. Retributive justice is primarily concerned with determining punishment of a crime. David Miller has identified three conditions to ensure justice in the matter of punishment:

(*a*) that punishment should only be inflicted on those found guilty of wrong-doing, using proper procedure;

(*b*) that punishment be uniformly imposed, *i.e.* the differences in penalty should always correspond to differences in wrong-doing; and

(*c*) that the scale of penalties should be proportionate to the various misdemeanours being punished—neither too severe nor too lax ('Justice' in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought,* edited by David Miller; 1987).

In short, retributive justice requires that punishment should be awarded for a crime duly proved, in proportion to the seriousness of crime; and that it should neither be too severe, nor too lax. On the other hand, distributive justice is concerned with the allocation of benefits and burdens according to the principles of social justice. David Miller, in his celebrated work *Social Justice* (1976), has defined the problem of social justice as that of determining 'the principles which should be chosen to govern the distribution of wealth, prestige and other benefits among the members of society'. He has identified three criteria which are usually invoked to determine the principles of distributive justice: (*a*) Protection of acknowledged rights; (*b*) Distribution according to desert; and (*c*) Distribution according to need. Each of these criteria has its own merits and demerits. None of these can be commended for the final selection.

Miller has also identified the corresponding social order upheld by each of these criteria. Accordingly, the principle of 'protection of acknowledged rights' gives rise to 'hierarchical order'. Its chief exponent was David Hume (1711-76). The principle of 'distribution according to desert' upholds 'competitive market system'. Its chief exponent was Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Finally, the principle of 'distribution according to need' corresponds to 'solidarity community'. Its chief exponent was Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921). Miller's classification is shown in the following chart:

Principles of Distributive Justice (as identified by David Miller)

Criterion of Justice	*Corresponding Social Order*	*Chief Exponent*
Protection of Acknowledged Rights	Hierarchical Order	David Hume (1711-76)
Distribution according to Desert	Competitive Market	Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)
Distribution according to need	Solidarity Community	Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921)

Now the first criterion, *viz.* the 'protection of acknowledged rights' creates a 'hierarchical order'. In this system people have different ranks or positions depending on how important they are. The very demand for the protection of existing rights and the maintenance of existing ranks implies the denial of justice to underprivileged sections. For instance, Aristotle's defence of slavery was based on the argument that the slave was incapable of virtue; that he could avail himself of the benefit of virtue only through serving his master. Defenders of Hindu caste system also declared that serving the higher castes amounted to penance for the members of the lowest caste (तप: शूद्रस्य सेवनम्). It is, therefore, impossible to attain the goal of social justice so long as we adhere to the principle of 'protection of acknowledged rights'.

The second principle, *viz.* 'distribution according to desert' which upholds 'market society' system, is ahead of 'hierarchical order' in the sense that it rules out the privilege based on birth, and determines one's share of social benefits according to one's contribution to the social good. However, it concedes vast disparities of income and wealth as it enables the owners of private property to multiply their wealth by hiring the physical and mental capacities of the working classes at competitive rates. In short, the competitive market system tends to widen the gap between rich and poor. Herbert Spencer, the chief exponent of this principle, sought to apply the law of 'survival of the fittest' to social life. He went to the extent of suggesting to stop any assistance to the incapable, the imprudent and the weak.

The third principle, *viz.* 'distribution according to need' is quite laudable, but it has its own difficulties. It will promote social solidarity only if it could be put into practice. But 'distribution according to need' is possible only if there is abundance of goods and services. That is only a hypothetical situation. If this principle is sought to be applied, even partially, in a scarcity situation which is always the case, it will kill incentive and discourage the talented and energetic people from giving their best to society. That would further impoverish society and make the application of this principle more difficult.

Solution to the problem can probably be found by a judicious combination of the second and third principles. In the first place, people should learn to minimize their needs, and make adequate contribution to material production for society, as taught by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher. The state should then make provision for meeting the minimum needs of people, to ensure their survival and basic education. Thereafter reward for each individual should be determined according to his contribution to the social good.

VI
LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE ON JUSTICE

Liberal perspective on justice treats liberty as the central problem of justice. It is particularly concerned with substantive liberty for which it seeks to accommodate the principles of equality and fraternity in the broader framework of liberty. This perspective is chiefly represented by Rawls's Theory of Justice.

Substantive Liberty

Substantive liberty refers to a condition in which individual finds himself fully capable of enjoying his freedom. For this purpose, he should be capable to understand what is good for him and for his society, determine his goals, and then achieve those goals without unreasonable restraints. Where necessary, concrete steps should be taken in the direction of removal of economic and cultural constraints from the life of the deprived sections of society.

RAWLS'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

John Rawls (1921-2002), contemporary American philosopher, in his celebrated work *A Theory of Justice* (1971) asserted that a good society is characterized by a number of virtues. *Justice is the first virtue of a good society*. In other words, justice is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of a good society. Those who argue that justice should not be allowed to come in the way of social advancement and progress run the risk of causing moral degradation of society.

Problem of Distribution

According to Rawls, the problem of justice consists in ensuring a just distribution of 'primary goods' which include rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth, means of self-respect and so on. Rawls has described his theory as the theory of pure procedural justice. It means that once certain principles of justice are unanimously accepted, the distribution resulting from their application will be necessarily just. Rawls has severely criticized those theories of allocation which ignore moral worth of the individual for the attainment of any predetermined goals. He has particularly attacked utilitarianism because in calculating the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' it does hot care if it leads to extreme hardship to any particular individual or group. For instance, one might imagine a state of affairs in which the maximum amount of happiness would be produced

and its distribution to a maximum number of people achieved by the enslavement of a minority. *Rawls has brilliantly argued that you cannot compensate for the sufferings of the distressed by enhancing the joys of the prosperous.*

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism refers to a school of thought founded by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) which prescribes 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' to be the goal of legislation and public policy. The balance of pleasure over pain derived from a thing or a course of action represents the amount of happiness. In estimating 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' each individual should be treated as one unit, but in estimating the total amount of happiness derived from a thing or action, this mode of thought does not pay due attention to the disparity in the share of particular individuals.

Rawls has evolved a unique methodology for arriving at a procedure for determining the rules of justice. Following the tradition of the 'social contract', Rawls has envisaged an 'original position' by abstracting the individuals from their particular social and economic circumstances. These individuals are symbolically placed behind a 'veil of ignorance' where they are supposed to be deliberating as rational agents. They are totally unaware of their wants, interests, skills and abilities as well as of the conditions which lead to discrimination and conflict in society. But they have an elementary knowledge of economics and psychology, and are also endowed with a 'sense of justice'. Each individual wants to maximize his or her well-being, without being envious. They are self-interested but not egoists. They are not prepared to take a risk or resort to gambling. According to Rawls, in such a state of uncertainty the rational negotiators will choose the least dangerous path. In other words, each individual will hypothetically place himself or herself in 'the least advantaged position' while recommending the criteria of allocation of the primary goods. Hence, each of them will demand greatest benefit for the least advantaged.

Social Contract

The idea of the social contract refers to an agreement among men whereby they relinquish the hypothetical 'state of nature' and enter into civil society. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), English philosophers and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), French philosopher, are regarded the chief exponents of the theory of the social contract. They have given different accounts of the state of nature, the terms of the contract, and the nature of political obligation which comes into existence in consequence of the social contract.

Principles of Distribution

As a result of the hypothetical negotiation under such conditions, *three principles of justice* will be accepted by all, according to Rawls, in the following order: (1)

Principle of equal liberty (*i.e.* equal right to most extensive liberty compatible with similar liberty of others) which postulates that nobody's liberty shall be compromised for the sake of any other benefit (liberty in this sense implies equal right of political participation, freedom of expression, religious liberty, equality before the law, etc.); (2) *Principle of fair equality of opportunity*, particularly for acquiring offices and positions; and finally (3) the *Difference principle* which implies that any departure from equal distribution of the primary goods can be justified only when it could be proved to bring greatest benefit to the least advantaged. In other words, a special reward for extraordinary ability and effort to any individual can be treated as just only if it results in the greatest benefit to the least privileged. When these conditions have been fulfilled, the criteria of reward according to efficiency can be justly applied in a competitive economy. In other words, the rule of allocation 'to each according to his ability' can be applied only if higher efficiency of the concerned individual results in ameliorating the condition of the least advantaged.

Here Rawls introduces the idea of the *chain connection* which implies that in order to strengthen a chain, we should start with strengthening its weakest link, and then repeat the process by identifying the weakest link on each occasion. As Norman Barry had elucidated: "Rawls...argues that a 'chain connection' operates between the best and the worst off and that a rise in the expectations of the best off will have the effect of raising everybody else's expectations throughout the system." The justifiability of any special concessions, subsidies or protection depends on empirical facts whether or not such benefits filter down ultimately to help the neediest. As Samuel Gorovitz has significantly observed: "Rawls... is clearly a redistributionist in that he takes the proper function of government to include not merely the maintenance of a social order, but the achievement of distributive justice by placing the highest social value on the needs of the neediest" ('John Rawls: A Theory of Justice' in *Contemporary Political Philosophers*, edited by Anthony de Crespigny and Kenneth Minogue; 1975).

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Rawls's theory of justice has been criticized by various schools of thought. *Collectivists* argue that he has discovered the ground for justification of the existing capitalist system. He has shown that if the rich have the freedom to accumulate wealth, the poor would be automatically benefited. Even if his principle of fair equality of opportunity is strictly enforced, the existing disparities between the rich and the poor will not be substantially reduced. A slight improvement in the condition of the most disadvantaged sections will be treated as an excuse to permit vast socio-economic inequalities.

Some critics argue that the identification of the most disadvantaged sections is very difficult. If income and wealth are treated the sole criteria for identifying such sections, how shall we compensate those who lack ability or who suffer from emotional insecurity?

Marxists contend that Rawls has tried to determine the principles of justice in a hypothetical condition where people deliberate behind a 'veil of ignorance'. Any

deliberations without the knowledge of prevailing social and economic conditions are meaningless. Moral systems should always be analysed in the light of class relations and the patterns of ownership of private property.

Libertarians argue that Rawls has sacrificed liberty for the sake of equality. Why should we force the meritorious and industrious to work for the benefit of the most disadvantaged sections? Moreover, enterprising persons must take risks for their advancement in life. Rawls's negotiators are not prepared to take risk. How would they help in social progress?

Communitarians point out that Rawls's political philosophy does not grade any conception of good life as superior or inferior to others. This ethical neutrality evades the opportunity of pursuit of the common good.

These diverse critiques seem to be based on biased interpretations of Rawls's theory of justice. In fact Rawls has tried to combine different value-systems in order to arrive at his theory of justice. Some tenets of these value-systems are thought to be incompatible with each other. Any attempt to combine them must yield a complex model. This applies to the present case also. *Rawls's theory of justice represents the convergence of libertarianism, egalitarianism and communitarianism.*

In the first place, Rawls is a *libertarian* because his conception of men negotiating in the 'original position' envisages a situation where each of them is trying to maximize his self-interest. This conforms to libertarian point of view. Secondly, his first principle of justice accords priority to liberty which cannot be compromised for any other benefit.

Then Rawls is an *egalitarian* because he concedes 'equal' liberty for all. Further, he insists that social-economic inequalities can be allowed only if they satisfy the condition of fair equality of opportunity for all. In other words, he accepts equality as the cardinal principle, and insists that only inequalities shall be required to be justified. Again, he rules that any reward for merit and effort must satisfy the condition that it yields greatest benefit to the least advantaged. Why should the meritorious accommodate the interests of the least advantaged? Here Rawls invokes the principle of the 'chain connection' operating between different individuals. More meritorious enjoy the benefits of their merit in association with the less meritorious lot. *A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.* Rawls shows that society can be strengthened by strengthening its weakest parts successively. The idea of 'chain connection' brings Rawls very close to the image of a *communitarian.*

Libertarian	=	One who believes in the primacy of liberty so that public policy allows each individual to get full reward of his ability and effort;
Egalitarian	=	One who believes in the primacy of equality so that public policy is designed to mitigate the glaring social disparities;
Communi-tarian	=	One who believes in the primacy of community so that public policy encourages each individual to strive for promoting his good as an integral part of the common good.

Composition of Rawls's Theory of Justice

Justice
(Point of Convergence)

Point of View	*Libertarian*	*Egalitarian*	*Communitarian*
The underlying principle	Primacy of Liberty	Primacy of Equality	Primacy of Community
Rawls's Position	Rawls's 'Rational Negotiators' seek to maximize their self-interest; Liberty gets priority over all other benefits	Rawls commends 'equal' liberty and fair 'equality' of opportunity for all. For him, equality needs no justification—only inequalities need to be justified	A 'Chain Connection' operates between all members of society. Strengthen the weaker parts of the chain successively in order to strengthen the full chain

It is true that Rawls contemplates to retain the capitalist system on some specified conditions. In a capitalist system, owners of the means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital) are allowed to maximize their profit. Though workers in this system are also free to improve their lot by virtue of their skills and capacities, yet the critics argue that this system is particularly inimical to the workers and ordinary people. However, it should not be forgotten that once the capitalist system is redesigned to accommodate Rawls's principles of justice, it is bound to assume a new humane look. In fact, *Rawls has discovered a method for making procedural justice an instrument of meeting the requirements of substantive justice.* By insisting on the emancipation of the least advantaged on priority basis, he has advanced the principle of moral individualism which requires consideration of individual cases for a favourable treatment, and prevents the better-placed members of the backward classes from taking undue advantage of their class position.

Moral Individualism

Moral individualism refers to a philosophical principle which regards individual as an end-in-itself, endowed with 'dignity'. Accordingly, no human being can be treated as a means to serve an end which lies beyond his conscious existence; no worldly thing can be treated as more valuable than a human being; and no human being can accept an obligation except at his own free will.

VII
LIBERTARIAN PERSPECTIVE ON JUSTICE

Libertarian perspective on justice also treats liberty of the individual as its central problem. But it focuses on formal liberty and insists on minimal role of the state in economic activities of individuals. It regards the right to property as an important ingredient of individual liberty. It is largely opposed to the idea of the welfare state which protects the poor through taxation of the rich. This perspective is chiefly represented by *Nozick's theory of justice* and *Hayek's view of justice.*

NOZICK'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

Robert Nozick (1938-2002), American philosopher, in his *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), sought to advance an alternative to Rawls's theory of justice. Whereas Rawls sought to moderate his libertarianism by a modicum of egalitarianism and communitarianism, Nozick adhered to libertarianism in its pure form. If Rawls is known as a 'left liberal' or egalitarian liberal advocating a substantially redistributive welfare state, Nozick may be described as a 'right liberal' or libertarian committed to a *laissez-faire* 'nightwatchman' state.

Nightwatchman State

Nightwatchman state refers to a state whose functions are similar to those of a nighwatchman, that is ensuring safety of life and property of its clients, *viz.* its citizens. In other words, it is responsible only for the maintenance of law and order within its territory and defence against external attacks. Its power of taxation is largely determined by the needs of performing this function. Indeed, 'nightwatchman state' represents the antithesis of 'welfare state'.

Modes of Acquisition

Nozick ridicules Rawls's approach which seeks to determine the principles of distribution of certain goods as if they have come to us as a gift from heaven. Nozick insists on a realistic approach which should account for the different modes of acquisition of goods and entitlement of different individuals to own those goods. He has identified three sources through which various goods are acquired by individuals:

(*a*) Their selves—their bodies, brain cells, etc. They have absolute right over them. An individual is free to use his limbs and brain to do whatever he likes;

(*b*) The natural world—land, water resources, minerals, etc. Individuals may acquire bits of the natural world through several methods and may become entitled to their use as they like. This is precisely the area where principles of entitlement are required to be determined according to logic; and

(*c*) The things people make by applying themselves to the natural world—

agricultural and industrial products, etc. An individual's entitlement to these products may not be questioned. Voluntary transfer of these goods will establish others' entitlement to them.

Principles of Entitlement

People's entitlement to self-ownership of their body and mind—their physical and mental faculties is obvious which needs no further justification. Their entitlement to bits of the natural world and the products of their labour should be based on the principles of justice. Nozick identifies three principles on which this entitlement would conform to justice :

(*a*) *Initial acquisition:* The method whereby an individual comes to appropriate some previously unowned bits of the natural world. Those who come to settle in an uninhabited continent may legitimately acquire its land and natural resources on 'first come, first served' basis, *as long as nobody is made worse off by their doing so.* This means that this mode of acquisition should not result in creating scarcity for others— a condition which may scarcely be satisfied. This is similar to the condition spelled out in John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690) in the case of similar acquisition, *viz.* 'as long as enough and as good is left for others';

(*b*) *Voluntary transfer:* It applies to all property whether acquired through initial acquisition or by mixing one's labour with the natural world, *i.e.* by means of one's talents, efforts, enterprise, etc. in a market situation. In other words, if I use others' labour and pay them as per market rates, I become owner of the product of their labour. This must be based on voluntary contract, without force or fraud. In all such transactions, an individual shall be treated as 'end-in-itself, and not as a means to other's end. This is similar to the moral principle enunciated by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), German philosopher. Hence a contract through which an individual sells himself or any other individual to slavery will be void; and

(c) *Rectification:* This is precisely the area where the state or the international community will be justified to intervene in order to restore justice. Nozick concedes that the history of the world abounds with involuntary transfers as well as unjust acquisitions of natural resources. As long as economic disparities result from voluntary transfers, Nozick is not bothered. But if some country has gained control over rare natural resources depriving others of their legitimate share, Nozick would step in to register his protest. If Wilt Chamberlain becomes a millionaire because millions of people are willing to pay for watching him play basketball, it is his legitimate right. If the inventor of the cure of a dreaded disease like cancer demands exorbitant charges from his patients, there is nothing wrong in this deal for Nozick, because he does not make anybody worse off by treating his patients. But if there is a single source of water which is needed by all human beings, nobody has the right to take it into his control.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Nozick claims to discover the principles of justice for all human beings, but his bias is quite clear. He is an out-and-out champion of a competitive market society which favours the rich and the resourceful and lets the weak go to the wall. He absolves the rich of all social responsibility, not to speak of social indebtedness. In a very large part of the contemporary world, justice is thought to be the ' voice of the oppressed'. But Nozick wants to maintain the prevailing oppression in the name of justice! Even his principle of 'rectification' is designed to legitimize the huge riches of the manipulators, and hit at the only assets of oil-producing countries because oil is needed all over the world and its resources are confined to a small region!

Nozick invokes moral principles to demolish a redistributive, welfare state. He approves of taxation only for the provision of common services, like streets and street lights, police and defence, etc. When a part of taxes imposed on the rich is spent on welfare of the poor, Nozick would term it immoral, as it is akin to 'forced labour'. In Nozick's view it involves using abilities and efforts of one section as the means to other's end; it involves involuntary transfer and, therefore, violates the moral principle. The lucky should have freedom to help the unlucky, if they like so! Nozick makes welfare of the poor dependent on charity, not on justice! He is not prepared to concede that the operation of competitive market society may itself create certain conditions of injustice.

In contrast, Rawls's provision for the regulation of social-economic inequalities on the condition of giving greatest benefit to the least advantaged shows his genuine concern for justice.

HAYEK'S VIEW OF JUSTICE

F.A. Hayek (1899-1992), Austrian philosopher, was a champion of freedom that enables the talents to flourish and thereby promote progress. He placed liberty or freedom above every other political ideal, like equality and justice. He particularly attacked the concept of social justice as an unrealizable principle.

In his later work *Law, Legislation and Liberty : The Mirage of Social Justice* (1976), Hayek argued that the idea of social justice itself is irrelevant. Justice is the characteristic of human conduct, and not of a society. If freedom is curtailed to promote equality, disputes over the distribution of life's goods are bound to give rise to conflict and controversy. Search for justice is simply a matter of procedure designed to promote freedom. Justice requires that each individual should get maximum opportunity to serve his interest according to his own understanding.

Hayek maintained that society has only limited resources which are not enough to satisfy everybody's needs. If we try to adopt the policy of social justice, the bureaucracy responsible for the implementation of that policy would assume the power of arbitrary distribution of those resources. This will harm the individual freedom. Again, diverse interest groups will start demanding a large share of these resources in order to serve their self-interest. Stronger interest groups will be able to corner the larger share. So the incompetent sections of society will be able

to grab an undue share of social wealth. As a result, the competent people will suffer. They will be discouraged from giving their best to society. This trend will impoverish society.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Hayek is keen to promote excellence in society. He is not worried about the plight of the poor and the unlucky. His way of thinking resembles the railways' policy on late-running trains. When many trains are running late, the railways would try that the trains which are less late should be given way to run on time, and those which are very late could be allowed to be further late. The emphasis is on reducing the number of late-running trains even if some trains become very, very late. Hayek would wish that the distinguished members of society should maintain and enhance their excellence even if the poor become poorer. Hayek not only rejects social justice, his philosophy also militates against the spirit of humanitarianism.

Humanitarianism

Humanitarianism refers to the spirit of human welfare which impels us to help the needy, the poor and the helpless. It is based on the view that every human being has the right to social assistance in the case of utter necessity. If somebody is in distress, he cannot be left to languish and die. It is the duty of society to come to his rescue and provide him with necessary means of subsistence, medical care and treatment to protect his life.

VIII
COMPARATIVIST APPROACH

AMARTYA SEN'S CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

Amartya Sen (1933-), eminent Indian social philosopher, has made a significant contribution to contemporary theory of justice, particularly through his recent work *The Idea of Justice* (2009). This work is supposed to be a critique of Rawls's theory of justice although Sen himself was a student of John Rawls, and this work is dedicated to his memory.

Sen has produced a lot of original and brilliant ideas on the issues of freedom, equality and justice in many of his earlier writings. In his *Poverty and Famines: An Essay in Entitlement and Deprivation* (1983), Sen sought to contradict the assumption that poor countries cannot afford to secure political rights to their citizens until their economic needs are met. It is sometimes alleged that political rights mean nothing to someone who is starving. Sen has demonstrated that this view is based on false proposition. At times the absence of entitlement to some good is mistaken for the absence of the good itself. In most cases of famine, many people starve not due to absolute absence of food but as a result of poverty they do not possess entitlement to the food that is available. Under the circumstances, the lack of political rights of people results in the failure to meet their economic needs. Sen has persuasively argued that there has never been a famine in a country with a

free press and a tradition of government by discussion. When potential victims of famines have an opportunity to publicize their plight, governments will be forced to respond. During the Bengal famine of 1943 (which Sen had witnessed as a child), India was ruled by the British, and people immensely suffered because an authoritarian government had suppressed information about their plight.

In another noted work *The Argumentative Indian* (2005), Sen has sought to explode the myth that Indian culture was hardly interested in the issues of social justice as it was spiritually oriented and mystical. Sen argued that there are strong philosophical Indian traditions that stress the importance of rational argument and the value of tolerance. Classic Sanskrit texts, such as the *Laws of Manu* and the *Bhagwad-Gita*, are as illuminating on the subject of justice as most works within the Western canon. Again, many ancient and medieval Indian rulers like Ashoka and Akbar were considerably more tolerant and rational than their Western counterparts. Sen asserted that reason, justice, liberty and democracy are not uniquely Western ideas that spread to the rest of the world; they are part of the common heritage of humanity. Moreover, it would not be logical to despise these values as the product of Western imperialism.

In his *The Idea of Justice* (2009), Sen further tried to substantiate his claim regarding the unique contribution of Indian intellectual tradition by drawing on the Sanskrit literature on ethics and jurisprudence. He proceeded to draw a distinction between two important terms of Indian origin : *Niti* (नीति) and *Nyaya* (न्याय) which are closely related to the concept of justice. *Niti* refers to correct procedures, formal rules and institutions. *Nyaya*, on the other hand, refers to the nature of the world that would be created by adopting correct procedures and institutions. To Sen, this distinction is also visible in the Western tradition of political thought. Thus Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant and Rawls insist on establishing correct institutions and procedures while Adam Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, Benthem, Mill and Marx focus on the goals that are sought to be achieved by establishing appropriate institutions and procedures. In the contemporary context, the ideas associated with the concepts of *Niti* and *Nyaya* have been expressed in terms of *procedural justice* and *substantive justice* respectively. C.B. Macpherson, Mahatma Gandhi and Amartya Sen himself may be regarded as the champions of substantive justice in this sense. Sen has further observed that *Niti*-oriented and *Nyaya*-oriented conceptions of democracy in the contemporary political discourse correspond to procedural democracy and substantive democracy respectively. *Nyaya*-oriented democracy stands for 'decision-making by discussion' which is far superior to the formal democracy based on periodic elections (*Niti*-oriented democracy).

In dealing with the theory of justice, at the outset Sen accepts Rawls's concept of 'justice as fairness'. However, he does not endorse Rawls's attempt to create an 'ideal theory' by abstracting individuals from their real life status, and postulating the principles of justice that would set a standard against which actual policy choices could be made. So he observes: "A theory of justice that can serve as the basis of practical reasoning must include ways of judging how to reduce injustice and advance justice, rather than aiming only at characterization of perfectly just

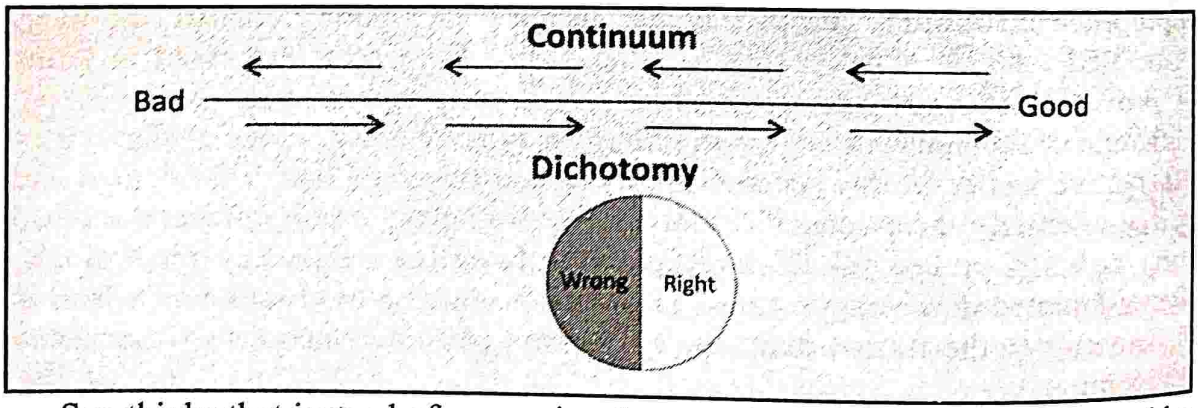
societies." Sen argues that social workers, lawyers or humanitarian NGOs might understandably have little time for discussing a perfectionist model of justice before going about their business. Sen dubs Rawls's approach 'transcendental intuitionism' in contrast to his own 'comparativist approach'.

In Sen's view, Rawls does not proceed by our experience of the real world: he seeks to create an account of justice that is universal and necessary, that applies everywhere and at all times. In the real life situations, people's claims to various things might be based on so many grounds, equally convincing. Grounds of these claims cannot be placed in absolute categories like 'just' and 'unjust'. At best we can compare different propositions as 'just to this extent' and 'unjust to that extent'. Instead of recognizing a 'dichotomy' between 'just and unjust' (like 'right' and 'wrong'), Sen prefers to measure 'justness' and 'unjustness' of different propositions (like 'good' and 'bad') as a matter of degree. In other words, the prevalence of justice and injustice in a society should be evaluated along a 'continuum'.

Continuum and Dichotomy

Continuum stands for a logical device for representing a range of variables which fall between two opposites. It is based on the assumption that though the two opposites are situated on extreme positions, like the two ends of a straight line, yet they are linked with each other so that they provide for easy access from one extreme to the other. The two banks of river, connected by an overbridge, may be cited as an example of a continuum.

Dichotomy, on the other hand, rules out such a possibility between two mutually conflicting positions. One may either stay on one extreme or the other. These are like the two banks of a big river which are not connected by a bridge or navigation facility.



Sen thinks that instead of measuring the soundness of our policy proposal by the standard of an 'ideal vision' of justice, it would be more practical to measure one possible policy against another possible policy. We should try to determine as to which one of the proposed policies would be more fair to the contesting parties, and thereby make the world a better place to live in.

Sen also hits at the 'contractarian nature' of Rawls's procedure of determining the principles of justice which sees justice as the product of an agreement among

members of a clearly defined society—a discrete, self-sufficient and self-contained entity. However, in the real world, the decisions made within one society can have serious consequences for others, as evident from the phenomenon of environmental degradation. If justice is defined as the product of a contract, the interests of non-participants, foreigners, future generations and perhaps nature itself are very likely to be neglected or compromised. This situation could probably be prevented by visualizing a contract within the global society which would be far removed from the ground realities of human organization.

In evolving his own theory of justice, Sen draws heavily on Adam Smith (1723-90), particularly on his first major work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). In Sen's view, this work offers a highly reliable approach to the nature of 'fairness'. Whereas Rawls employs an elaborate fiction to arrive at his notion of 'fairness' (the rational negotiators deliberating behind a hypothetical 'veil of ignorance' about their real life situation), Smith proceeds to identify an 'impartial spectator', observing a particular state of affairs from the outside. Instead of a cumbersome and complicated notion of the 'original position' contemplated by Rawls, Smith contemplates an 'impartial spectator' who discriminates between justice and injustice after shedding all prejudices and setting aside all considerations of self-interest. Sen asserts that fairness involves a reasonable concern with the interests of others.

Sen seeks to apply this argument in the global context when he suggests that the inhabitants of rich and powerful countries have a special obligation to adopt the viewpoint of an 'impartial spectator', and feel concerned with the plight of those who suffer from malnutrition, poverty and oppression. In other words, the rich and powerful sections of humanity should recognize and respect the interests of the poor and the powerless. For instance, the decisions taken by the United States have worldwide implications whether they are addressed to the issues of terrorism or global financial crisis. So these should be motivated by a serious concern with the conditions prevailing in the developing nations. In short, Sen seeks to convert Adam Smith's idea of one nation's 'impartial spectator' into the vision of a 'global impartial spectator'.

> I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.
>
> Abraham Lincoln

> Nothing can make injustice just but mercy.
>
> Robert Frost

IX
CONCLUSION

Justice is primarily a problem of moral philosophy. In politics, the concept of justice is used as a guide to public policy. The question of justice arises under

two conditions: (*a*) In a scarcity situation—where goods, services, opportunities, etc. are too scarce to satisfy all contestants; and (*b*) In an open society—where allocation of various benefits is not tied to fixed status of various individuals but they are free to demand a fair share on some reasonable ground. In a hierarchical or authoritarian society where all social goods and services are allocated to different sections of society according to a predetermined scheme, justice is conceived as the strict adherence to that scheme. In an open society, we may consider two major criteria of allocation: (*a*) Allocation according to need; and (*b*) Allocation according to desert, merit and ability. In a scarcity situation it is impossible to meet everybody's needs. If we resort to an equal distribution of social goods and services for the purpose of equal satisfaction of everybody's needs irrespective of their contribution, then no incentive will be left to work hard. The result will be less production and a lesser availability of goods and services, etc. for distribution and a general impoverishment of society.

On the other hand, if we introduce a purely competitive system, ignoring needs altogether, some human beings might be constrained to lead sub-human life. This would result in a general moral degradation as well as loss of the potential for social progress. Justice, therefore, requires that a provision should be made for meeting some minimum needs of all human beings irrespective of their individual contribution to society. Minimum needs could include means of subsistence, health care, some level of education or literacy, and some job opportunities because a job is not only a means of subsistence but also a means of self-respect. While making allocations according to need, it is imperative that the neediest should get priority. Needs should be determined on individual basis (or family-unit basis). If some groups or classes are declared to be entitled to special concessions, they are bound to develop a vested interest in the system. As a consequence, the claims of the neediest individuals (or family-units) among other categories are bound to be ignored, resulting in injustice.

Once the provision for minimum needs has been made, an additional reward can be given according to desert. Criterion of desert is, again, by no means a simple issue. A purely competitive system is no answer to the question. In a system based on desert, reward will depend on four factors: (*a*) one's talents and skills; (*b*) effort; (*c*) opportunity; and (*d*) social demand. Of these, the first two factors, *viz.* talents and skills combined with effort, are hardly controversial, but the last two factors, *viz.* opportunity and social demand might prove to be beyond control of the individual. Talents and effort may go unrewarded or scantily rewarded for want of adequate opportunity. Then variations in social demand might result in overvaluation or undervaluation of talents. As John H. Schaar ('Equality of Opportunity, and Beyond' in *Contemporary Political Theory,* edited by Anthony de Crespigny and Alan Wertheimer ; 1971) has argued, talents might not be rewarded according to their intrinsic worth due to variations in the prevailing hierarchy of values in different social settings. Thus, soldierly qualities and virtues were highly admired and rewarded in the ancient Sparta, while the poets languished. C.B. Macpherson has lamented on the lack of creative freedom for ordinary human beings in a capitalist system. In view of these constraints, the state should create

adequate opportunities for and give suitable encouragement to sublime arts and professions in order to meet the requirements of justice.

Creative Freedom

Creative freedom refers to an important aspect of human freedom which regards man as a doer and creator. This concept of freedom demands ample opportunities for development and application of his uniquely human capacities, because essence of man's freedom lies in fully realizing his creative faculties for the fulfilment of his self-appointed goals. C.B. Macpherson (1911-87), Canadian political philosopher, has argued that in the capitalist market society, owners of land and capital wield immense power to exploit the manual and intellectual capacities of ordinary citizens. Under this system, the poor are constrained to sell their capacities according to the needs of the market; they have little opportunity to use these capacities for the fulfilment of their self-appointed goals. Thus, capitalist system provides no scope for the poor to enjoy their creative freedom.

Q. 1. Identify the problem of justice in contemporary society. Do you agree with the view that the search for justice would be relevant only in an open society?

2. Write short critical notes on : (*a*) Legal justice; (*b*) Political justice; and (*c*) Socio-economic justice.

3. Distinguish between retributive and distributive justice. Identify the respective spheres of application of these forms of justice.

4. Discuss the merits and demerits of 'allocation according to desert' and 'allocation according to need' as the criteria of distributive justice.

5. "Rawls has sought to achieve the goal of substantive justice through the methodology of procedural justice." Elucidate and comment.

6. Elaborate the libertarian perspective on justice with special reference to the views of Nozick and Hayek.

7. Evaluate Amartya Sen's contribution to contemporary theory of justice.

9

Crime and Punishment

I
CONCEPT OF CRIME

Crime and punishment are closely related ideas. In common parlance, crime, offence or criminal offence is defined as an unlawful act punishable by the state. In this sense, an act is treated as a crime if the state and its law declare it to be so. One act may be treated as a crime in one state but not elsewhere. Even in the same state, an act that was considered a crime in the past may not be so considered today. For example, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, witchcraft was considered a crime in many countries. Many people were accused of witchcraft and punished. But it is no longer possible. In some very backward parts of India which are still governed by superstitions, some people are accused of witchcraft and punished by local elders. This is not approved by the present-day law. As soon as such cases are reported to the police, action is taken against those who pronounced such punishment. Again in pre-industrial times, pollution of air and water nowhere figured in the list of crimes. But in the contemporary society, these are considered crimes.

In any case, no act is arbitrarily declared a crime in any state at any time. There are well-thought out reasons behind such declaration. This may be illustrated by the following cases:

(*a*) An act is declared a crime that is harmful not only to a particular individual but also to the community. In other words, such act is considered a threat to the prevailing social values on which the safety and solidarity of the community depends. Thus theft, murder, public nuisance, etc. are always bound to be declared crime anywhere;

(*b*) With the evolution of social consciousness and scientific thinking, some acts may be dropped from the list of crimes as they were included in this list due to the prevailing superstitions and unscientific beliefs. The practice of witchcraft is a case in point;

(*c*) Some new acts may be included in the list of crimes as under new

circumstances, they seem to threaten our social safety and solidarity;

(*d*) A crime attracts punishment because it holds the individual solely responsible for his unlawful act. With the development of social thought and social science, it is now realized that some crimes are largely caused by social conditions. The trend is therefore to reduce the harshness of punishment, and to undertake reform and rehabilitation of the offender, apart from taking necessary steps in the direction of social reform and social reconstruction; and finally,

(*e*) Some crimes are committed by an individual, not on his own initiative, but on the orders of the state at the instigation of a misguided leadership. Mass violence or genocide and war crimes are the case in point. It is debatable whether it would be fair to punish an individual solely on this ground.

Genocide

Genocide refers to an inhuman act of deliberate and systematic extermination of a whole populatic:n, tribe or a nation. It is mainly motivated by ethnic hatred or grievance against a relatively well-placed ethnic group in a country. Genocide usually involves mass murder of innocent people who cannot be tried in a court of law for any apparent crime. For example, in 1915 the Turkish Empire systematically murdered one and a half millions of Armenians simply because they were Christians. Between 1942 and 1945 the Nazi rulers in Germany murdered six million Jews and gypsies because they were relatively well-placed in the business world. Between 1975 and 1979 the Khmer Rouge (the Cambodian Communist) committed genocide against its own people (estimated to be between one and two million) who were alleged to be influenced by foreign contacts or technology.

War Crimes

In international law, war crimes refer to the crimes involving violation of laws of war, such as genocide, indiscriminate destruction of civilians, and inhuman treatment of prisoners-of-war, etc. Those accused of war crimes can be tried before international tribunals after the end of war. Nuremberg Trials, held against German war criminals after the Second World War (1939-45) represent an outstanding example of such action. However, since these tribunals are dominated by the victors, the excesses committed by the vanquished side are largely exaggerated while those committed by the victorious side are diluted or ignored. The chances of fair trial in these cases, therefore, seem to be very thin.

II
NOTION OF PUNISHMENT

In common parlance, punishment denotes an act to make someone suffer in some way because he has done something wrong. Punishment must be imposed by an

authority, that is the person or human agency that controls the behaviour of the alleged wrong-doer. Penalties that are supposed to be imposed by nature or God cannot be treated a punishment in this sense. Punishment may also imply the denial of some benefit to which the alleged wrong-doer was otherwise entitled. Wrong-doing may include a deliberate fault, disobedience of a command, violation of law or norm, or any act universally regarded as wrong. Punishment must carry a stigma with it so that the one who is punished is also ashamed of it. Penalties which are not accompanied by condemnation—such as library fines, or the fines on the cancellation of a railway reservation—are not punishments in the real sense of the term although these may indicate some inconvenience caused to others.

Reward and punishment are widely used in all social institutions as a device for encouraging desirable behaviour and discouraging undesirable behaviour. These are the indicators of social approval and disapproval respectively. Families, schools, work-places, friendship clubs and even international organizations seek to punish their members for any deviant behaviour on their part. However, the central issue of punishment in modern society is concerned with the legal process whereby violations of criminal law are punished according to the provisions of law and certain judicial principles. In the realm of social and political philosophy, punishment must be considered as an ethical issue which is chiefly concerned with justification of punishment.

Nature of Punishment

- Punishment involves infliction of pain or suffering or some loss to its recipient.
- It is imposed on a person guilty of an offence, like disobedience of a command, violation of law or norm or any other wrong act.
- It is imposed by an authority, *i.e.* a person or human agency who is fully competent to punish the offender.
- It must entail a stigma to make the offender ashamed of his act.
- It must be justified on moral ground. Nobody should be deprived of his life, liberty or property except as a punishment of an offence duly proved.

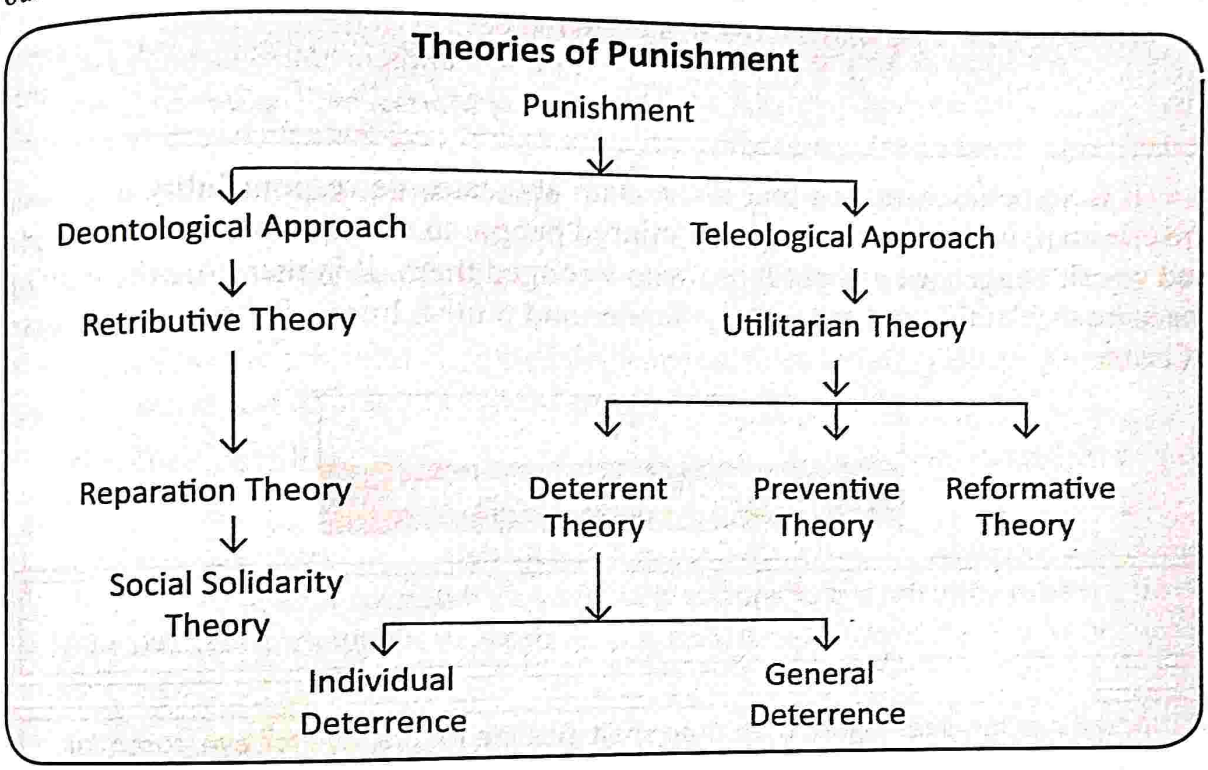
III
JUSTIFICATION OF PUNISHMENT

> It is as expedient that a wicked man be punished as that a sick man be cured by a physician; for all chastisement is a kind of medicine.
>
> Plato (427-347 B.C.)

> Punishment is justice for the unjust.
>
> St. Augustine (354-430)

> Crime and punishment grow out of one stem.
>
> Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)

Moral justification of punishment may be advanced on several grounds. Broadly speaking, justification of punishment comes from two schools of thought: (*a*) Retributive theory; and (*b*) Utilitarian theory. Retributive theory is based on deontological approach. It treats punishment as an end-in-itself, and comprehends other similar theories, like Reparation theory and Social Solidarity theory. On the other hand, Utilitarian theory is based on teleological approach. It seeks to justify punishment on various grounds as a means to secure 'Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number'. It gives rise to several theories of punishment, particularly Deterrent theory, Preventive theory and Reformative theory. Deterrent theory refers to individual deterrence as well as general deterrence. Thus we have a sizeable number of theories of punishment as shown in the following chart. We shall also take up the arguments advanced by each of these theories before drawing our own conclusion.



Deontological Approach and Teleological Approach

Deontological approach identifies an ultimate principle which is treated to be right. It is absolutely necessary to follow it irrespective of its consequences. Teleological approach, on the other hand, identifies a worldly purpose which is treated to be good. Any act or policy is judged by its consequences in terms of the good produced by it.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism refers to a school of thought founded by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), English philosopher, which treats pleasure and pain as the chief motive force behind all human actions. The balance of pleasure over pain derived from a thing or a course of action is termed as 'utility' which is the source of 'happiness'. According to this view, the guiding principle of public policy should be 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'.

Utilitarian View of Punishment

All punishment is mischief: all punishment in itself is evil. Upon the principle of utility, if it ought at all to be admitted, it ought only to be admitted in as far as it promises to exclude some greater evil.

Jeremy Bentham : *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789)

Utilitarian Justification of Punishment

The immediate principal end of punishment is to control action. This action is either that of the offender, or of others: that of the offender it controls by its influence, either on his will ...in the way of reformation; or on his physical power...by disablement: that of others it can influence no otherwise than by its influence over their wills...in the way of example.

Jeremy Bentham : *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789)

It is sometimes argued that if the state abdicates its responsibility to punish the criminal, it would encourage the injured people to take law in their own hands and wreak vengeance against those who wronged them. It is therefore the duty of the state to identify and catch the offender and punish him suitably in every case of crime.

IV
RETRIBUTIVE THEORY

If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye.

Code of Hammurabi (C. 2100 B.C.)

And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Bible: Exodus

Retributive theory of punishment is based on the principle of retributive justice. Retributive or rectificatory justice holds that if a person has inflicted some harm on another, then the injustice involved in this act should be balanced by rectifying the situation, or by regaining an equality that was overturned by this act. This principle may be crudely expressed as 'eye for eye, and tooth for tooth'. Retributive theory insists on taking from the offender an equivalent of what he had snatched from his victim and giving it back to the injured party as individual compensation. *Reparation theory* requires that the offender should compensate the larger society by doing something socially useful and morally uplifting (such as community service), thereby compensating for the harm done to society.

Now it may be admitted that the principle of individual compensation could

be successfully applied in the case of tangible property only, but it could not be applied literally to all cases of offence. If the victim is dead, it would be impossible to revive him. Similarly where a woman's modesty is outraged, it is not possible to make good the loss. Under such circumstances, retributive theory holds that an offence may 'cry out' for punishment, and the moral order is out of balance until it is restored by punishing the offender appropriately. Punishment will not make up for the loss, but it will somehow console the berieved or the injured party. This theory upholds the principle that *the severity of punishment should be directly proportional to the seriousness of crime.*

German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) may be regarded the chief exponent of the retributive theory of punishment. In his *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), Kant observed:

> Judicial punishment...can never be inflicted simply and solely as a means to forward a good, other than itself, whether...of the criminal, or of civil society; but it must at all times be inflicted on him, for no other reason *than because he has acted criminally.*

Kant argued that a human being should always be treated as an end-in-itself, and not a means to another's end. This is the supreme principle of morality or the 'categorical imperative'. If an individual commits a crime, he violates this supreme principle of morality. In other words, an act of crime overturns justice. Punishment to the criminal is, therefore, imperative to restore justice. Kant asserts the supreme value of justice in these words:

> If justice perishes then it is no more worthwhile that man should live upon the earth.

Then Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), French sociologist, advanced his *Social Solidarity theory of punishment* which is akin to retributive theory in some respect. Durkheim conceived of crime as a violation of the collective conscience, which consists of values held in common by the members of society. In his well-known essay *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), Durkheim argued that punishment is essentially a ceremonial reaffirmation of the societal values that are violated and challenged by the crime. He compares punishment with a ritual whereby moral order is upheld, social solidarity is reinforced and the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable conduct is redrawn. In short, the purpose of punishment is to enhance *social solidarity* by strengthening the basic social values violated by the offender.

Social Solidarity

Social solidarity refers to a condition in which members of a society identify themselves with that society, and feel bound to support it. All sections of society display a strong faith in the basic values of society and devotion to its basic interests. They are inclined to combine their resources and energies for the fulfilment of its goals and objectives even if they are required to sacrifice their self-interest. Social solidarity lends strength and stability to a society.

Setting aside other purposes of punishment, Durkheim agreed that the crucial significance of the punishment inflicted on a murderer is that it supports and enhances the general belief in the sanctity of human life, not that it instills fear in the minds of other potential murderers or that it seeks to reform the offender. In Durkheim's view, punishment of criminals is something like the sacrifice of individuals for the common good. In this way, Social Solidarity theory of punishment, like the retributive theory, treats punishment as an end-in-itself.

Retributive theory of punishment can be traced back to ancient legal systems. It maintains that the punishment of wrong-doing is a moral right and duty, and an essential component of a civilized society. It insists that before imposing any punishment, the offender should be correctly identified, that is his guilt should be established beyond doubt, and that punishment should be proportionate to the crime, that is it should not be excessive. Whereas utilitarian theory holds that punishment should serve a defined purpose (*e.g.* deterrence, prevention or reformation), retributive theory expects the punishing authority to demonstrate that the proposed punishment is well-deserved. *While utilitarian theory fails to relate the amount of punishment with the seriousness of crime, retributive theory fails to account for the proper effect of punishment.*

Retributive theory of punishment is sometimes described as the principle of 'just deserts'. It implies that the main purpose of punishment is to denounce the crime and 'visit retribution' on the criminal to the extent he deserves it. Retribution should not be confused with revenge which is usually disproportionate to the seriousness of offence. *While retribution corresponds to retributive justice, revenge has no place in any philosophy of justice.*

The merit of retributive theory lies in the absence of discrimination between different citizens on the basis of their social status. It only takes the nature of crime into consideration while determining the punishment for a crime. It therefore rules out the grounds of discrimination as suggested by some ancient philosophers. For example, Manu, ancient Indian law-giver, had prescribed a differential scale of punishment of a similar crime for different castes, so that the lower the caste, the harsher the punishment. Similarly Aristotle, ancient Greek philosopher, had suggested harsher punishment of a similar crime for the slave in comparison to that for the freeman on the ground that the slave was 'less sensitive'!

However, retributive theory has its own weaknesses. It holds the offender fully responsible for his action. Some sociological doctrines, however, hold that a great amount of wrong-doing is not the manifestation of conscious and deliberate action of persons responsible for themselves. They argue that many of their acts are the outcome of social conditions in which they have been born and bred. For example, those living in overcrowded tenements lacking facilities for healthy recreation, are more likely to turn to crime than those living in comfortable conditions. Critics of this view argue that it is not fair to attribute the cause of a person's good or bad deeds to his social conditions which are beyond his control. As Ernest Barker (*Principles of Social and Political Theory* ; 1951) has elucidated :

The difficulty of a doctrine which transfers responsibility for wrong-doing

from the wrong-doer to Society, and to the conditions created or tolerated by Society, is that persons living in the same set of social conditions differ greatly from one another in their behaviour and action. If some are impelled to wrong-doing, a great many more are law-abiding; and it cannot therefore be said that a given set of social conditions inevitably and uniformly produces a corresponding type of action.

However, it cannot be denied that some social conditions, like slum-dwelling, lack of education, public health facilities and recreation, etc. serve as a breeding ground for criminal tendencies. It is the responsibility of society to create more congenial conditions for people in order to prevent crime. As regards the principle of punishment, this argument has only a limited relevance. As Barker had observed:

> What does not follow is that persons born and bred in bad social conditions can be treated on a different basis from other persons; though in determining the particular degree or character of punishment the judge may well take into account the milieu of such persons *(ibid.)*.

Again, as long as retributive theory upholds similar punishment for similar crime without reference to the cause of crime, it will tend to defeat justice in many cases. For instance, if a rich man's son steals for the thrill of it, can we compare his offence with that of a poor man's son who steals a loaf of bread because his is hungry and destitute? Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-74), a Christian philosopher, had argued that in case of urgent necessity where a starving person may take what legally belongs to another cannot be considered to have obtained it through robbery!

In a nutshell, if retributive theory of punishment is totally divorced from sociological circumstances of crime, it fails to maintain justice in all cases.

As regards the justification of capital punishment, retributive theory would insist that the befitting punishment for a crime involving murder cannot be less than the death penalty. This proposition can be accepted only if we accept the retributive theory of punishment unconditionally. But if we believe in investigating the complex causes of the crime and examining the possibility of reforming the criminal, capital punishment will be justified only in very few cases.

V
DETERRENT THEORY

> No punishment has ever possessed enough power of deterrence to prevent the commission of crimes.
>
> Hannah Arendt (*Eichmann in Jerusalem*; 1963)

Deterrence was the original concern underlying utilitarian theory. It implies that the main purpose of punishment is to deter or discourage people from committing crime. This principle works in two directions : (*a*) Individual deterrence; and (*b*) General deterrence.

Individual deterrence tends to impress on the offender himself that crime is not 'paying' and that it is not 'worth committing' again. If an offender is fined, he suffers financial loss. If he is imprisoned, he loses his liberty and undergoes a lot of suffering. As punishment entails a stigma, the offender feels ashamed which undermines his self-esteem. Thus he learns that committing crime is always dangerous.

General deterrence implies that when a criminal is punished, it sets an example for others to learn the lesson which the offender learns for himself by undergoing punishment. Advocates of deterrent theory recommend 'exemplary' or very harsh punishment so that it discourages people effectively from indulging in crime.

Critics of deterrent theory argue that it makes punishment disproportionate to the seriousness of the offence in order to 'make a point'. Others point out that deterrent theory is based on the assumption that crime is committed as a 'rational choice' as if the offender undertakes 'cost-benefit analysis' before deciding to offend. Sociologists and criminologists have amply shown that crime is mostly an impulsive act, and that it largely stems from irrational thoughts and feelings. Effective prevention of crime requires appropriate reform in social conditions. Setting examples of harsh punishment will hardly serve the purpose.

Advocates of capital punishment commend it for its highest deterrent value. If a prospective offender is convinced that when his crime is proved, he would be sentenced to death, he would be too frightened to commit the crime. This claim can be vindicated only when it is proved that the offender committed the crime after thorough calculation of its consequences. Where a crime is committed under extraordinary stress, the deterrent effect of the legal provision of capital punishment will hardly remain relevant.

Moreover, deterrent value of punishment will be more effective only if police is fully alert to catch hold of the offender. *Certainty of punishment will be more effective than the severity of punishment.*

> Whenever the offence inspires less horror than the punishment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way to the common feelings of mankind.
>
> Edward Gibbon (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; 1776-88)

VI
PREVENTIVE THEORY

> To punish and not prevent is to labour at the pump and leave open the leak.
>
> Thomas Fuller (1608-61)

Preventive theory of punishment is based on the argument that when an offender is deprived of freedom of movement, as in the case of imprisonment, or otherwise

disabled, he is unable to repeat the offence. Thus society is saved from possible harm for some time. This theory upholds capital punishment, *i.e.* death penalty for the most dreaded criminals so that the society would never face them again. If x burgles my house, he should be put behind bars to stop him from burgling anybody's house. If x murders y, he should be sent to the gallows to stop him from murdering anyone else. In short, this theory insists on protecting the public from further harm by the offender.

> Men are not hanged for stealing horses, but that horses may not be stolen.
>
> Lord Halifax (1750)

Rather than relying on the rational judgement of the offender that 'crime does not pay', this theory adopts the safer way of reducing the opportunity for crime by restricting the offender's liberty, or eliminating him altogether. Imprisonment is the first step in this direction. But in the case of a dreaded criminal, even life-imprisonment is not thought to be sufficient. It is feared that the prisoner may escape, or in any case he might be released at some point when he will get another opportunity to commit crime. Sometimes ex-prisoners are given 'community service order', or sent to a 'probation centre', or required to report regularly to a police station, or subjected to 'electronic monitoring'. The extent of restriction has to be decided according to seriousness of the crime. In this respect, this mode of punishment follows the principle of proportionality as applicable in retributive theory.

Critics of preventive theory argue that it is indifferent to the origin of crime in society. It pays no attention to reformation of the criminal or to prevention of crime itself. It is akin to the primitive way of dealing with criminals which interpreted crime as the effect of evil spirits, and people sought to get rid of the criminal himself as the evil spirits were beyond their control. In some primitive tribes, criminals were excommunicated or even thrown into the sea. In short, preventive theory of punishment is not fit for application in the modern age when social sciences have given illuminating analysis of the causes of crime and methods of crime prevention.

> To crush, to annihilate a man utterly, to inflict on him the most terrible punishment so that the most ferocious murderer would shudder at it before hand, one only need give him work of an absolutely, completely useless and irrational character.
>
> Fedor Dostoevsky (1862)

VII
REFORMATIVE THEORY

> Punishment is not for revenge, but to lessen crime and reform the criminal.
>
> Elizabeth Fry (1848)

Reformative theory of punishment holds that when the criminal is made to suffer on account of the wrong done by him, he realizes his fault and learns to behave better in the future. Accordingly, the experience of punishment brings about fundamental changes in the personality, attitude and behaviour of an offender. Reform of the offender is closely related with his rehabilitation. Reform implies a change in his attitude or beliefs, whereas rehabilitation implies a change in his circumstances leading to the change of behaviour.

Some criminologists and psychiatrists like Eliot Slater and Bernard Glueck, and some penal reformers like Barbara Wootton, have sought to dealink the type and amount of punishment from the nature of crime committed by anyone. Instead of considering whether the criminal was fully responsible for his action, and whether he can be wholly or partly exonerated in view of the circumstances which led him to crime, these thinkers prefer to ask what kind of treatment is most likely to rehabilitate him, which would also set an example for others. This view does not recognize crime as a voluntary breach of law, nor defines punishment as a deliberate infliction of suffering. Writers like Samuel Butler and the American lawyer Clarence Darrow view crime as a kind of sickness to be treated rather than a wrong to be punished.

> Better build school rooms for 'the boy',
> Than cells and gibbets for 'the man'.
>
> Eliza Cook (1853)

So the reformative theory of punishment is sometimes interpreted as an approach which seeks to replace punishment itself by an effort at reform and rehabilitation of the offender. In other words, this theory does not favour inflicting intense pain on the offender but treats him like a patient admitted to a hospital. On this logic a prison, particularly for the first or non-habitual offeners, should be converted into a place for counselling, education and training of the inmates where they learn self-control and improve their skills so as to re-enter society, on completion of their sentence, as self-dependent and law-abiding citizens.

Counselling

Counselling refers to the process whereby a trained professional gives support and guidance to a person who is experiencing undue stress in life. The purpose of counselling is to enable the person concerned to take control of his own life and to manage it in a better way.

It may be conceded that reformative approach to punishment may prove effective in reshaping the behaviour of the first offender or, at best, the behaviour of non-habitual offenders. But it is not at all fit for the hardened criminals whose proportion is very large. Again, it totally ignores the deterrent role of punishment. Reformative approach will be more effective if it is intended to supplement normal punishment, rather than replace it altogether. A prison sentence may persuade a man that 'crime does not pay'; from a reform-oriented prison he will come out as a 'reformed character' showing remorse for his past misdeeds, resolving not to

repeat them, not through fear of further punishment, but simply because they were wrong.

Theories of Punishment : A Comparative Study

The Issue	*Retributive Theory*	*Deterrent Theory*	*Preventive Theory*	*Reformative Theory*
Objective of Punishment	Restore moral order disturbed by the crime; strengthen social solidarity	Discourage the offender from repeating crime, and others from committing crime	Disable the offender to repeat crime; protect the society from his fury	Transform the offender to a law-abiding citizen
Recommended Type of Punishment	Severity of punishment proportionate to the seriousness of crime	Harsh punishment	Harsh punishment	Not very harsh punishment, but to supplement it by counselling, education and training
Strength	Reaffirms moral values of society	Discourages crime effectively	Gives a sense to security to society	Reforms and rehabilitates the criminal
Weakness	Ignores social constraints behind crime; distorts justice in some cases	Ignores impulsive factor behind crime; not effective in all cases	Ignores the prospects of reformation of the criminal	Not suitable for hardened criminals whose proportion is very large

Reformative theory is the antithesis of deterrent theory of punishment. Deterrent theory advocates severe punishment; reformative theory recommends mild punishment. Efficacy of punishment should not be assessed only on the basis of its impact on the offender; we should also consider its impact on the society including future offenders. If a prospective offender sees a convict being hanged or suffering unbearable pain, he might be frightened and dissuaded from committing crime. On the contrary, if he sees a criminal being reformed, returning to society as a respectable citizen, he would hardly see any reason to abandon his idea of crime. But we should also remember that all crimes are not committed after full calculation or cost-benefit analysis. Some crimes are committed under heavy psychological and economic pressure or out of frustration from utter failure in one's fight against injustice. Such offenders deserve different treatment. Their self-confidence, hope and trust in the social organization must be restored in order to convert them into law-abiding citizens. For such cases, reformative theory of punishment will prove most fruitful.

VIII
DEBATE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

In common parlance, capital punishment means death penalty. Technically, it means death penalty awarded under a judicial verdict in accordance with the provisions of law as a punishment for crime. In recent decades, many civilized countries of the world have abolished capital punishment. However, it still exists as a part of the Indian penal system. Judicial practice in India has decreed that a death sentence for a murder ought to be used *in the rarest of rare cases*. By and large, such crimes are punished by life imprisonment. The question has been raised from time to time whether capital punishment should be retained in the statute books or it should be abolished altogether!

Capital punishment for murder was abolished in the UK under the Murder (Abolition of Death Penalty) Act 1965. However, death penalty continued to exist for a small number of offences, such as piracy and treason. With the ratification of the Sixth Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights by the UK and the introduction of the Human Rights Act 1998, death penalty is now completely abolished in the UK, apart from special provisions in respect of acts that might be passed in times of war. In fact, abolition of death penalty is one of the conditions of eligibility for the membership of the European Union. Many American States have already abolished death penalty.

The debate concerning the need to abolish death penalty in India was revived recently when A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, during his tenure as the President of India, returned all clemency petitions pending with him to the Government (2005), asking them to seriously consider adopting a reformative system of justice. The underlying idea was to evolve a system of justice which believes in reforming criminals, rather than a system that believes in retributive justice. In the course of this debate, an outgoing Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India came out in support of retaining death penalty in the statute books while the newly appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court stated that he was personally against the retention of death penalty. However, it was up to the Parliament to take a final decision in the matter.

> It is not reasonable that those who gamble with men's life should not pay with their own.
>
> H.G.Wells

One strong argument against the retention of death penalty in the statute books was that most of those who were awarded death sentence were from the poorest of the poor. This implies that while the well-to-do sections manage to defend their case by engaging best brains and escape punishment by availing themselves of the 'benefit of doubt' under the judicial procedure, it is the poorer sections who are ultimately awarded death sentence for want of efficient defence of their case. This could also mean that kingpins of the underworld and stalwarts of the organized,

white-collar crime are using the poor and vulnerable persons to serve as proxy for their evil deeds. For this they might use threats or resort to 'buying the life of poor people' (for which confession and other evidence could be fabricated) against a paltry sum which would be a great relief for their extremely poor and hard-pressed families.

Moreover, death penalty is also sought to be abolished on humanitarian grounds. It is argued that it is inhuman on the part of the state to put anybody to death while it cannot give life to anybody. Another strong argument in this behalf is that our legal system is primarily based on evidence. If an alleged criminal is executed on the basis of available evidence, it becomes irrevocable. If on the basis of new evidence it is discovered later that the person in question was innocent, then no remedy is left with us. Can we allow the state — its executive and judiciary — to be a party to such act?

President of India has to consider clemency petitions against the death sentence in the light of all these factors. It is also argued that the deterrent role of capital punishment cannot be proved beyond doubt. Empirical studies have shown that the rate of murders does not go up with the abolition of death penalty in a particular region, nor does it go down with its reintroduction. A person may be impelled to resort to a heinous crime like murder under extreme emotional stress and then repent over the act. Giving him death sentence would close all the doors to his reformation and the possibility of his lifelong commitment to the service of humanity, even from behind bars! After all, crime is not an inborn tendency. A person may resort to crime in the absence of proper care by elders, for want of proper education, enlightenment and healthy way to socialization, but under proper supervision with a humanistic touch, he or she could be turned into a decent and law-abiding citizen. Again, if the death sentence of the bread-winner of a family is commuted to life imprisonment, he may be inclined to work hard in the prison and earn something to support his family for which he retains a lot of affection!

All these arguments hint toward the need to abolish death penalty from the penal code. Most of those who support the retention of death penalty largely realize this. However, they put forward their case in a different context. The aforesaid conditions probably do not apply in this context. In the contemporary society, threat to our security is not confined to the conventional sources, *i.e.* the ordinary criminals. A new breed of extremists and terrorists has come up in recent decades who plan mass killings of innocent people in different parts of the world. They are no longer the groups of poor and oppressed people revolting against a cruel regime. They may have grievances against some powerful and oppressive elements. But there is not the slightest justification for killing innocent people— young and old, men and women, rich and poor— without discrimination. Present-day terrorist organizations are very resourceful and well-organized but absolutely unscrupulous in their operations. They resort to intensive indoctrination of the young, unemployed youth and train them in widespread, subversive activities all over the world!

It is only with reference to this new breed of criminals that the outgoing Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India pleaded for the retention of death

penalty in our statute books. As he stated: "We only think about the rights of the accused and forget the rights of the victims." In other words, appeal to the human rights of a terrorist has no meaning if we cannot make him respect the human rights of innocent citizens who happen to be his victims. In a nutshell, capital punishment or death penalty must be retained in our statute books in order to deal with the menace of terrorism and other inhuman acts like cruel gang-rape followed by murder, and 'honour killing' of innocent women which involves a deliberate 'dishonour' of humanity.

Honour Killing

Honour killing refers to a retrograde practice which imposes very strict discipline on women, and requires her to avoid mixing with strangers. The moment a girl is found exercising her freedom in choosing her partner herself, she is accused of violating the 'honour' of her family, and brutally killed by the family elders.

IX
CONCLUSION

The recent interpretations of punishment largely focus on the 'disciplinary' and 'normalizing' aspects of modern penal systems. Thus Michel Foucault (1926-84), French philosopher (*Discipline and Punish*; 1975), observes that in the contemporary society increasingly knowledgeable penal apparatus is able to exert deeper and more positive forms of control on those caught up in the system. Punishment here is viewed as a form of power and governance. It tends to keep a strict watch on the behaviour of the offenders with a view to moulding it according to social norms. In other words, the deeper knowledge about the causes of crime enables the present system to exercise extensive power and control over the behaviour of offenders so as to reform it suitably.

Some critics have raised serious doubts about the effectiveness of punishment itself. Psychologists point out that the effects of punishment are often short-lived and that the recipients of punishment tend to build up a resistance to it. They want to replace the system of punishment by the methods of positive reinforcement for reshaping the behaviour of offenders. Criminologists argue that the capacity of the penal system to transform individuals, or to reduce crime rates is severely restricted. Sociologists insist on adopting effective methods of handling social conflict itself which is largely responsible for the prevalence of crime in society.

With the growth of civilization and growing consciousness of human rights, inhuman forms of punishment have been gradually abolished. For example, the practice of maiming of criminals by blinding them or chopping of their limbs was abolished as it amounted to violation of human rights. In many civilized countries, death penalty has been abolished. Where it still continues, extremely cruel ways of causing death are no longer permissible.

Human Rights

Human rights are those rights to which an individual is entitled by virtue of his status as a human being. Where an individual's civil, political and social-economic rights are exhausted, such as in the case of a foreigner, a refugee, a prisoner-of-war or a proclaimed offender, he can still hope to get some relief under the umbrella of human rights.

Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (issued by the United Nations in 1948), rules out torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to any person.

The principle of human rights further requires that no arbitrary law should be enacted, and no one should be subjected to inhuman treatment under false pretence of legal action. Cases of undertrials languishing in jails for over a decade even without charges being framed against them involve a gross violation of human rights. No one should be subjected to extreme insult or torture for confession of a crime or disclosure of a secret. Even when someone's offence is proved, he should not be subjected to extremely cruel and disgraceful punishment. For instance, if a woman has committed a heinous crime, she should not be forced to a naked parade or outrage of her modesty as a measure of punishment. Such inhuman punishment would be degrading not only to that particular individual but to womanhood as such and to society at large. Similarly, when a criminal is awarded a death sentence, he should be subjected to a peaceful death, not to an extremely painful death like being burnt alive or being thrown into boiling oil. Such inhuman acts cannot be permitted in a legal system of a civilized society. On the same logic, the use of atomic, biological and chemical weapons in war is banned under international law as it brings untold suffering upon the population, and thereby violates human rights.

Punishment to any person must be pronounced by a judicial authority after a fair trial of the case. Death of an accused in police custody, rape of a woman in police custody or death of a suspect in fake police encounter are the most serious violations of human rights. In 1980 some thirty accused in Bhagalpur jail (in Bihar) were mercilessly blinded by the police. In 1994 Punjab police caused tattooing 'pickpockets' on the foreheads of some tribal women. Such incidents were widely deprecated as violations of human rights.

In a nutshell, with the expanding frontiers of knowledge concerning human psychology and sociology and growing consciousness of human rights, the trend is toward humanizing penal systems of the civilized world. However, it would be too optimistic to suggest that the system of punishment itself can be abolished. In any case, we can hope to have gradual reforms in the penal system to make any type of punishment more meaningful and more effective in the prevention and control of crime.

Q. 1. Bring out the relation between crime and punishment. Outline the major theories concerning justification of punishment.

2. Write critical notes on : (*a*) Retributive theory of punishment; (*b*) Deterrent theory of punishment; (*c*) Reformative theory of punishment; and (*d*) Capital Punishment.

3. "The recent trend is towards humanizing the mode of punishment." Elucidate and comment.

10

Principle of Humanism

I
WHAT IS HUMANISM?

Humanism stands for a philosophy which holds that human dignity, human interests and human welfare are entitled to primary importance in all worldly affairs. It also believes in immense potential of human understanding and treats it to be capable of finest achievements.

Origins of this philosophy may be traced to ancient Greek mode of thought. It may be recalled that Protagoras (5th century BC) had declared that 'man is the measure of all things.' In the Middle Ages when all thought came to be 'God-centred', the primacy of 'man' was relegated to the background. Yet Pope once admitted that 'the proper study of man is mankind'. However, humanist mode of thought remained largely eclipsed throughout the Middle Ages. It was revived at the end of the Middle Ages with the advent of the Renaissance.

Renaissance is a French word which means 'rebirth'. In European history, it stands for a period of cultural revival which began in late-fourteenth century in Italy, travelled to France in the fifteenth and to England and Germany in the sixteenth centuries. Renaissance marked a renewed interest in the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. It was attended by several historical events which brought about momentous changes in the prevalent mode of thought. These events included the Fall of Constantinople (1453), invention of the printing press (1455) and the Discovery of America (1492). When Constantinople was occupied by the Turks, a large number of Greek scholars fled to Italy alongwith a lot of ancient manuscripts held in their possession. So they brought many brilliant ideas with them which were new to the medieval thinking. They had a profound effect on art and literature which now became the medium of expression of human sentiments instead of religious teachings. This new trend in art and culture came to be known as 'humanism'.

Then with the rise of a new merchant class during those days, artists and men-of

letters found new patrons of their work and they became relatively free to express their own feelings. Besides, invention of the printing press enabled new ideas to travel far and wide with an unprecedented speed. Discovery of America opened a new land of promise for the enterprising Europeans where they could establish and shape their social and political institutions according to their own insight. In a nutshell, the new era opened new avenues for the recognition of human ingenuity.

II
BASIC TENETS OF HUMANISM

In modern times humanism represents an extensive value-system. It may be interpreted in different ways in different spheres of life. However, salient features of modern humanism may be summed up as under :

HUMAN BEING IS THE CENTRAL CONCERN OF THE WORLD

Of all the elements in the world—various forms of life, natural resources, artefacts, art and culture, science and technology, etc. — human being should be treated as an issue of central concern. Relative importance of other elements should be determined on the basis of their significance for the human being.

HUMAN EXPERIENCE IS THE SOURCE OF ALL VALUES

Human experience is the basis of all constituent elements of civilization, *e.g.* human capacity for knowledge, beauty, pleasure, love, reason, emotion and self-awareness. Human body, its potentiality, its fragility, its individuality and its mortality are the most important aspects of human experience which must find expression in all directions of human effort.

HUMAN DIGNITY AND WELFARE SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER GOALS

Each human being irrespective of race, sex, region, religion, culture, economic and educational status, etc. should be treated as an end-in-itself, and not a means to another's end. Nobody shall accept any obligation toward another except at his free will and in consideration of mutual benefit. Human accomplishment, power, status and welfare should be a cause of celebration. Loss of human life, damage to human health or self-esteem should be avoided under all circumstances and at any cost.

SOCIETY SHOULD FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION OF HUMAN PROBLEMS

Of all the problems that may arise in different spheres, priority should be accorded to the solution of problems involving human beings. Reduction of human suffering and enhancement of creative faculties of human beings should be the foremost goal of social policy.

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO SOCIAL PROGRESS

Human knowledge is constantly evolving. No knowledge can claim authority because it had been traditionally accepted. The existing knowledge should be continuously subjected to criticism in the light of current experience. Social institutions should be continually adjusted with the new developments in the field of knowledge. Their capacity to serve humanity should be raised constantly. In other words, development of human knowledge would prove instrumental to social progress.

Some brilliant thinkers in the Western as well as Indian traditions have enunciated the principles of humanism from different points of view. Of these, Immanuel Kant, Swami Vivekanand and Rabindranath Tagore are particularly important.

III

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMANISM: IMMANUEL KANT

CONCEPT OF MORAL FREEDOM

In the Western tradition, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) may be regarded as the chief exponent of modern humanism. Kant was a distinguished German philosopher of the eighteenth century who laid firm philosophical foundations of humanism. *Interlinkage between moral philosophy and political philosophy is the hallmark of Kant's political thought.* He proceeds from the concept of 'moral freedom' in order to arrive at the standards of political behaviour. This idea is inspired by Jean-Jaques Rousseau's concept of the 'real will', but Kant developed it in his own way.

Real Will

Real will refers to an aspect of individual's will identified by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), French philosopher. Rousseau distinguished between two aspects of individual's will: Actual will and Real will which represent his lower self and higher self respectively. Actual will is motivated by his immediate self-interest; real will by his ultimate and collective good. Actual will is transient, real will is stable. Actual will varies from individual to individual; real will is common to all members of the community.

Now Kant identifies the real will as 'good will', as it is concerned with good of individual as well as society. It represents that aspect of individual's will which is inspired by Reason. It is *Reason* which *impels the individual to realize that each individual should be treated as an end-in-itself, not as a means to serve another's end.* This idea culminates in his sense of duty. Kant argues that individual's

freedom lies in fulfilling his will that is informed by his sense of duty. Hence, his moral freedom coincides with his true freedom.

Kant asserts that when the sense of duty imparts identical consciousness to all individuals, it may be expressed as a universal rule. It states that we should act only in a way that we think anyone else in the same situation should also act. For example, when reason directs all individuals 'do not steal', it becomes a universal rule because we wish to live in a world where nobody would steal anything. An aggregate of such universal rules is identified as 'law' which needs the state for its enforcement. Hence the very idea of moral freedom is the reason behind the existence of the state.

Kant maintains that men should enter into any relation with each other only at their free will. Hence the objective of any contract should be the mutual benefit of the contracting parties, and not to promote the interest of any one party. It is important to note that the character of the 'rational negotiators' envisaged by John Rawls (1921-2002), contemporary American political philosopher, in his theory of justice, corresponds to Kant's concept of men acting at their free will.

> Every action which by itself or by its maxim enables the freedom of each individual's will to co-exist with the freedom of everyone else in accordance with a universal law is right.
>
> Immanuel Kant (*Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*; 1785)

PRACTICAL REASON AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Kant holds that our concepts are formed within the context of various human activities involving labour, science, arts, etc. which seek to mould the universe for fulfilling human needs and objectives. So philosophy should be founded on the knowledge as to how men strive to mould the universe. Man's practical reason is not determined by cause and effect relationship of the physical world, but it is capable of distinguishing between good and evil. It is therefore guided by the moral law which should be recognized as the foundation of metaphysics. Thus Kant propounds the theory of sovereignty of moral law.

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and awe, the more often and more seriously reflection concentrates upon them: the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me.
>
> Immanuel Kant (*Critique of Practical Reason*; 1788)

The maxim of moral law in Kant's philosophy leads to the concept of human dignity. It holds that each human being is entitled to a special regard only because it is a human being. In other words, every human being is by nature endowed with a unique quality, that is human dignity which cannot be exchanged for any worldly value. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), Kant distinguished between two types of ought-statements: *categorical and hypothetical*. The hypothetical statement suggests what an agent ought to do when he desires to achieve some objective. On the other hand, the categorical statement prescribes what ought to be done independently of such condition. Kant argued that only a

categorical statement suggests an action that has genuine moral worth. Accordingly, *categorical imperative* implies what an individual ought to do independently of any desire to achieve a specific end.

Kant identified three formulations of this principle: (*a*) One ought to act only according to that maxim by which he can will at the same time that it should become a universal law; (*b*) One ought to act in such a way that he always treats humanity, whether in his own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end; and finally, (*c*) One ought to act as though he were through his maxims a law-making member of a 'kingdom of ends'. In a nutshell, *the categorical imperative directs the individual to transcend his personal ends, identify the ends concerning all humanity, and ceaselessly pursue only those ends*.

> Man in the system of nature ... is of little significance and, ... has an ordinary value ... But man as a person, *i.e.* as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above all price. For ... he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of other people, or even to his own ends, but is to be prized as an end in himself.
>
> Immanuel Kant (*Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*; 1797)

NATURE OF POLITICS

Kant strongly recommends that morality and politics should be closely related. He argues that "true politics cannot take a single step without first paying homage to morals". He draws a clear distinction between moral motives and legal motives. Moral motive refers to acting from good will or respect for moral law. On the other hand, legal motive refers to acting from the fear of law. Now politics can be utilized for the reconstruction of legal institutions. Since politics operates on the strength of legal motive, it cannot be seen as a manifestation of good will. A better legal order may prove conducive to moral order. But as long as it is based on legal motive, it is bound to remain inferior to moral order.

> Nothing in the world — indeed nothing even beyond the world — can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except as a good will.
>
> Immanuel Kant (*Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*; 1785)

Kant argues that if politics could be shaped by morality, it would be instrumental to promoting public legal justice by forbidding war and insisting on 'eternal peace' as well as the 'rights of man'. The concept of human dignity can serve as a bridge between morality and public legal justice. This can also serve as a bridge between arts and morality. In that case, arts shall be devoted to serve the purpose determined by the moral sentiment.

If all individuals had good will, they would respect all others as 'ends' — indeed as members of the 'kingdom of ends'. Then a perfect moral order would come into existence. But since men are by nature inclined to evil as well as good, founding of an effective legal order becomes necessary. It is therefore imperative

that legal order is designed to serve the moral ends as effectively as possible.

Kant apprehends that a sovereign authority may tend to violate the 'rights of man' by treating men as means to serve his self-interest. War is a glaring example of misuse of sovereign authority; it is a powerful instrument of fulfilling some immoral purpose of the rulers, *e.g.* territorial aggrandizement. In order to obviate this problem, Kant hopes that a healthy politics would be conducted on the lines of republicanism. Under this arrangement, people would rise above the status of 'subjects' and become full- fledged 'citizens'. In short, Kant wants politics to serve moral ends through the instrument of law. He hopes that the citizens of a republic would never consent to a decision for war.

Republicanism

Republicanism refers to a form of governance in which sovereign authority is not held by any hereditary King or Queen, but the power to rule is derived from the authority of people who are regarded to be 'equal citizens' in terms of their legal and political rights. Republicanism also rules out the existence of any privileged class in society or politics. In a kingdom, people are treated as 'subjects' governed by the will of the King or Queen; in a republic, they become 'citizens' who are governed by their own will.

IV
HUMANIST VISION OF SWAMI VIVEKANAND

Man is higher than all animals, than all angels; none is greater than man.

Vivekanand

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902), modern Indian saint-philosopher, may be regarded as a prominent exponent of humanism. His humanism is a natural corollary of his faith in spiritualism. In his *Preface to Raja-Yoga,* Vivekanand concedes: "Each man is only a conduit for the infinite ocean of knowledge and power that lies behind mankind." In his several illuminating speeches and writings (published as *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*), Vivekanand has brilliantly outlined his concept of man (that is the human being irrespective of its gender, race, region, religion or nationality) and the value of humanity when so conceived. *A man becomes man in the real sense when he rises above his animal existence and devotes himself to the pursuit of perfection.* According to Vivekanand: "Man is man so long as he is struggling to rise above nature, and this nature is both internal and external."

The most important distinction between the animal and the man is... that the animal is very nearly bound within the limits of its necessities... But man... earns a great deal more than he is absolutely compelled to spend... There are large outlying tracts, surrounding his necessities, where he has objects that are ends-in-themselves.

Rabindranath Tagore (*Personality*; 1917)

Commenting on the ascent of man, Vivekanand holds that man is initially endowed with virtue which must be developed persistently. In the words of Swami Vivekanand, "Man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower to higher truth." Becoming a man in this sense is the sole standard of perfection in the universe. As the Swami observes: "Angels or gods, whatever you may call them, have all to become men, if they want to become perfect." When man proceeds to upgrade his initial virtue, and becomes man in the real sense of the term, he becomes self-regulating and self-governing. Focusing on this quality of man, Vivekanand declares: "Man is not bound by any other laws excepting those which he makes for himself." It is at this stage that man becomes all-powerful; he becomes able to do finest things on earth. So Vivekannd maintains : "There is no limit to man's power, the power of words and the power of mind." Power, in this sense, refers to the ability to do good, to emancipate the down-trodden, and to make the world worth living. Vivekanand cannot conceive power as the ability to exploit others to fulfil one's self-interest. When man is conceived as an epitome of virtue, he turns to be the most valuable asset of the universe. That is why Vivekanand claims : "Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world."

Man is divine.
Man is the highest being in creation, because he attains to freedom.
Man is at the apex of the only world we can ever know.
Man is the epitome of all things and all knowledge is in him.
Man is the best mirror, and the purer the man, the more clearly he can reflect God.

Vivekanand

Humanism is the only—I would go so far as saying the final—resistance we can have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history.

Edward W. Said

V
TAGORE'S CONCEPT OF HUMANISM

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMANISM

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), great Indian poet, philosopher and educationist, was an ardent humanist. Like Swami Vivekanand, he evolved his view of humanism on spiritual foundations. Accordingly, each human being is regarded as mirror of the divine. Tagore argued that the supreme person, or the infinite, dwells in human personality itself. In other words, each human being is a replica of God. Tagore lamented that the human spirit had been suppressed by the despotism of government and other organs of power for long. It could attain freedom only

through mental and moral illumination.

Tagore regarded man as the culmination of the creative process. The creative spirit is therefore a hallmark of human existence whether it is manifested in the work of art and literature or in the humblest vocations like tilling the soil, breaking the stones, or building the road. All human activities are equally dignified in the eye of God. The creative spirit of man is the source of all splendour, beauty, fragrance and elegance in the universe. It is the source of delight for everybody. Man should perform his duty with a sense of joy. Tagore asserted that splendours of the creative spirit cannot be realized in the isolation of forest retreats. Life should be accepted in all its phases—comedies as well as tragedies—with full enthusiasm. Asceticism or renunciation is not conducive to realization of God. God dwells in a broken home as well as magnificent temples and churches. Compassion for the lowly, the forlorn, the lost and the humiliated is the sure way of access to God.

> Man as a creation, represents the Creator, and this is why of all creatures it has been possible for him to comprehend this world in his knowledge, in his feeling and in his imagination, to realize in his individual spirit a union with a spirit which is everywhere.
>
> Rabindranath Tagore (*The Religion of Man*; 1930)

> He who is wise tries to harmonize the wishes that seek for self-gratification with the wish for social good, and only thus can he realize his higher self.
>
> Rabindranath Tagore (*Sadhana*: *The Realization of Life*; 1913)

ROAD TO FREEDOM

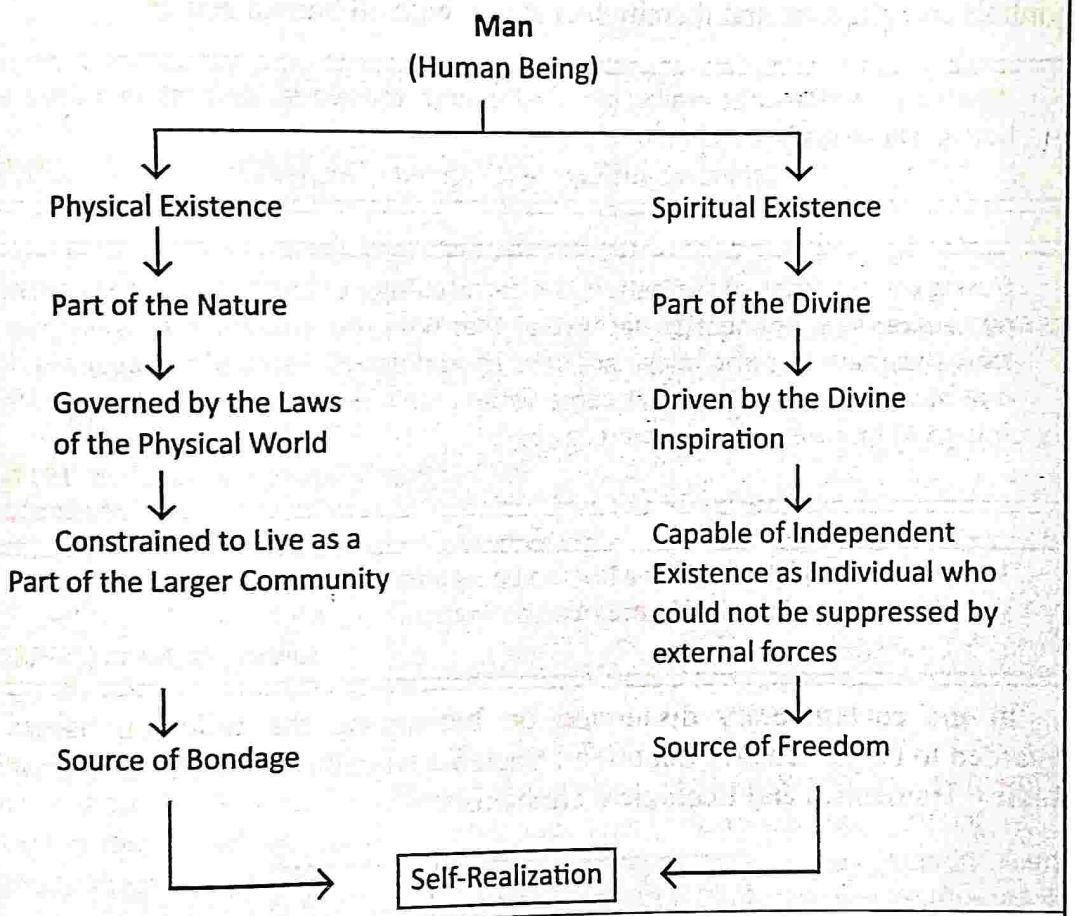
Attainment of freedom is the keynote of Tagore's humanism. He identifies two aspects of human being : his physical existence, and spiritual existence. Physically he is part of the Nature where he is governed by the laws of the physical world. Here he is not free; he is also constrained to live as a part of the community. On the other hand, his spiritual existence is a part of the Divine. Here he is driven by divine inspiration. In this capacity, he is capable of independent existence as individual who could not be suppressed by any external forces. The realization of his individuality could serve as a motive force behind self-realization. When individual is driven by the spiritual force, his physical existence does not come in his way to freedom. Tagore firmly believes that human body is not a cage of the soul; it is a medium of attaining self-realization by invoking the divine inspiration which is an integral part of human existence.

> Every true freedom that we may attain in any direction broadens our path of self-realization.... The unimaginative repetition of life within a safe restriction imposed by Nature may be good for the animal, but never for Man.
>
> Rabindranath Tagore (*The Religion of Man*; 1930)

Freedom is not in darkness, nor in vagueness. There is no bondage so fearful as that of obscurity. It is to escape from this obscurity that the seed struggles to sprout, the bud to blossom.

Rabindranath Tagore (*Sadhana : The Realization of Life*; 1913)

Tagore on the Road to Freedom


Man
(Human Being)
Physical Existence
Part of the Nature
Governed by the Laws of the Physical World
Constrained to Live as a Part of the Larger Community
Source of Bondage
Spiritual Existence
Part of the Divine
Driven by the Divine Inspiration
Capable of Independent Existence as Individual who could not be suppressed by external forces
Source of Freedom
Self-Realization

Body is not a cage of the Soul; it is a medium of attaining self-realization by invoking the divine inspiration which is a part of human existence.

Tagore had a firm faith in the potential of man to overcome all obstructions in his way to emancipation. This was beautifully expressed by him in the following words:

> As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man... A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage
>
> (*Crisis in Civilization*; 1941).

SYNTHETIC UNIVERSALISM

Tagore's humanism was further expressed in the principle of 'synthetic universalism'. It seeks to extend the reach of human personality beyond national frontiers, towards universal dimension. Tagore argued that when people evolve their political organization

into different nations, rivalry between these nations tends to obstruct their mental and moral development. Each nation resorts to regimentation of thought of its people with a view to consolidating its power and glory. This situation proves to be fetters on human freedom. In order to obviate this destructive tendency and to achieve constructive ends, each individual should strive to develop his or her talents by rising above narrow nationalism and entering into creative relationship with the whole humanity. For this, he or she should get in touch with world literature, art, religions, philosophy, social symbols and etiquette and thereby feel at one with all human beings.

> When a man does not realize his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him.
>
> Rabindranath Tagore (*Sadhana : The Realization of Life*; 1913)

> During the evolution of the Nation, the moral culture of brotherhood was limited by geographical boundaries because at that time those boundaries were true. Now they have become imaginary lines of tradition divested of the qualities of real obstacles. So the time has come when man's moral nature must deal with this great fact with all seriousness or perish.
>
> Rabindranath Tagore (*Nationalism*; 1917)

> The only sacrosanct thing is the human being and matters should be judged from the social point of view of human betterment.
>
> Jawaharlal Nehru (1953)

In the contemporary discussion on humanism, the following issues are regarded to be particularly important: Socialist Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Radical Humanism and Ecological Humanism.

VI
SOCIALIST HUMANISM

> The supreme principle of socialism is that man takes precedence over things, life over property, and hence work over capital.
>
> Eric Fromm

Socialism is primarily an economic doctrine which seeks to place the major means of production, distribution and exchange under social ownership so that the material resources of society could be utilized effectively for the welfare of human beings. In this sense, the objective of socialism closely corresponds to the goal of humanism. As C.E.M. Joad *(Introduction to Modern Political Theory* ; 1924) has significantly observed :

> Socialism in fact seeks to free the individual from the pressure of material cares, in order that he may live his life in his own way and freely develop his personality.

As socialist thought has developed in several directions, it would not be advisable to look for a single model of socialist humanism. However, we can identify two major forms of socialist humanism: (*a*) Early socialist humanism; and (*b*) Humanist thought of Marx.

EARLY SOCIALIST HUMANISM

Early nineteenth-century socialism as propounded by Saint-Simon (1760-1825), Charles Fourier (1772-1837) and Robert Owen (1771-1858) was dubbed 'utopian socialism' by Karl Marx (1818-83) in order to distinguish it from his 'scientific socialism'. Early socialism was called 'utopian' because its exponents created very fascinating pictures of an ideal social and political order which could not be realized in practice. They largely relied on benign nature of man to bring about the change of heart of capitalists. Marx particularly pointed out that capitalists would never part with their power until they were overthrown by an organized working class.

Whether revolutionary method was more effective in sustaining socialism than the evolutionary (or democratic) method remained a matter of debate throughout the twentieth century. However, it cannot be denied that early socialism was strongly inspired by the humanist spirit. Its exponents wanted to eliminate the causes of injustice and human misery. Saint Simon, a French philosopher, the founding father of modern social science and socialism, focused on the modernizing forces of science, industry and technological innovation and insisted on adapting social and political systems to those new forces. His humanist bias was so strong that his prominent disciple, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), came out with a new 'religion of humanity'.

Charles Fourier, another French philosopher, was a severe critic of capitalist system and its values. He advocated the formation of workers' organizations wherein their basic physical, mental and even emotional needs would be met through the processes of mutual support and democratic self-government. Women would achieve true equality with men, and a sexual revolution would liberate both men and women from the oppressiveness of the traditional family structure.

Robert Owen, British communitarian socialist, sought to put his ideas into practice by setting up cooperative organizations of 2000 to 3000 people from the working class, in order to secure greater equality, justice and human happiness. In his essay on *A New View of Society* (1812-13), Owen observed that human character and behaviour are always shaped by the social environment. He held that the problem of the mechanization of the labour process under industrialism was a potentially enslaving force. He sought to fight it out by the communal ownership and control of the means of production.

In a nutshell, early socialist humanism sought amelioration of the social conditions by an appeal to humanist cause and by persuading the capitalists to encourage workers to set up a new just social order through their cooperative effort. There was no scope of exploitation in this system as it was to be fully informed by the spirit of humanism.

HUMANIST THOUGHT OF MARX

At the outset, it is important to note that humanist thought of Marx (1818-83) is associated with the work of Young Marx, *i.e.* Marx at the age of 26. At this age (in 1844) Marx had not yet formulated the principles of his 'scientific socialism'. Marx's humanist thought was not published, not even made public, during his lifetime. His manuscripts containing this thought were discovered from German archives as late as 1927 and later published as *'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844'* (EPM). This and other early writings of Marx now comprise a major source of one stream of Neo-Marxism.

Scientific Socialism

Scientific socialism refers to the form of socialism based on the scientific laws derived from historical analysis. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) are the chief exponents of this theory. They held that various stages of historical development are the manifestations of contradictions in material conditions which necessarily lead human society to the goal of socialism. Whereas utopian socialism regards socialism as a moral choice, scientific socialism considers it a historical necessity.

Neo-Marxism

Neo-Marxism refers to a new version of Marxism which looks at capitalism as the major source of dehumanization and technological domination. Humanist stream of Neo-Marxism does not recognize the 'mode of production' as the sole determinant of social change, but undertakes an analysis of the subtle methods of dominance and dependence at various levels of contemporary society—such as economic, political, cultural and psychological levels—and tries to work out the way to human emancipation.

Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* lay down the ethical basis of socialism and humanist foundations of freedom. Here he has severely criticized the capitalist system for its dehumanizing effect. He has demonstrated that the capitalist system deformed the productive activity of man and caused his alienation in several ways. Broadly speaking, alienation refers to the condition of a person or group in which it is emotionally and intellectually separated from its surroundings including its own activity and its social circle. According to Marx, alienation of man in the contemporary society was an outcome of the system of commodity production, division of labour, private ownership, market economy, monetization of exchange and similar features of capitalism.

Capitalism

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production, where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as the market demand.

Marx identified four levels of alienation:

(a) In the first place, man is alienated from his own product and from his work process, because the worker plays no part in deciding what to produce and how to produce;

(b) Secondly, man is alienated from nature—his work does not give him a sense of satisfaction as a creative worker; under mechanization, the work tends to become increasingly routinized and monotonous;

(c) In the third place, man is alienated from other men through the competitive character of the economic system which forces everyone to live at someone else's expense and divides society into irreconcilable class interests; and

(d) Finally, man is alienated from himself because the *realm of necessity* dominates his life and reduces him to the level of animal existence, leaving no room for the taste of literature, art and cultural heritage.

Thus, capitalism subordinates all human faculties and qualities to the conditions created by the private ownership of capital and property. The capitalist himself, no less than the worker, becomes a slave to the tyrannical rule of money.

Levels of Alienation

- Alienation from one's product.
- Alienation from nature
- Alienation from other persons
- Alienation from oneself

Deliverance from this bondage is only to be found in the realization that society is a creation by which man attains a fuller measure of freedom, which is obstructed by the peculiar conditions created by the private property, and these conditions exist in their worst form under the capitalist system. Its remedy may be found in communism which will enable society to restore human values and inaugurate a new era of freedom. In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of* 1844, Marx has defined communism without reference to hatred or class war:

> Communism is the *positive abolition of private property, of human alienation,* and *the real appropriation of human nature* by and for man. It is, therefore, the return of man himself as a *social,* that is really human, being, a complete and conscious return which assimilates all the wealth of previous development. Communism as a fully developed naturalism is humanism and as a fully developed humanism is naturalism.

In this context, *naturalism* refers to the condition when human being is the part of nature itself. At this stage, human existence is the outcome of a long process of biological evolution. In this process, man is governed by inexorable laws of nature. On the other hand, *humanism refers to the condition when man acquires full knowledge of the laws of physical nature as well as social life, and with the help of this knowledge he develops the faculty of social reconstruction according to his own will.* At this stage, man is no longer the slave of nature but turns to be

the maker of his destiny. In Marxist terminology, this stage is called *praxis*.

The humanist face of Marxism is also visible in some later works of Marx and Engels (1820-95), particularly where they focus on freedom of man. In *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels define communism as a stage 'in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'. Then Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring* (1878), argued that capitalism and communism are characterized by *necessity* and *freedom* respectively. Necessity denotes the condition under which the life of man is governed by inexorable laws of nature, which exist independently of man's will. Man can acquire scientific knowledge of these laws for his own benefit, but cannot change them at his will. Freedom does not consist in the escape from *necessity* to a dreamland but in the knowledge of these laws, and the capacity to make these laws work towards definite ends, which again depends on their scientific knowledge. This applies both to external nature and the inward human nature.

Accordingly, a sound knowledge of the productive forces operating behind the capitalist system and a programme to make these forces work toward human ends—towards the emancipation of human society—were essential instruments of human freedom. This knowledge revealed that only a programme of socialist revolution would lead to humanity's *'leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom'*.

VII
SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM

The term 'scientific humanism' is used in various contexts. Broadly speaking, it denotes the belief that science can and should be used to enhance human dignity. In this sense it owes its origin to the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.

Scientific Revolution

In European history, scientific revolution refers to the series of changes which began in the mid of the sixteenth century when some brilliant scientists made an attempt to understand the intricacies of the world of nature with necessary proofs. Of these, Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), Polish astronomer, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), English philosopher, Réné Descartes (1596-1650), French philosopher, and Isaac Newton (1642-1727), British mathematician are most notable. The advent of scientific revolution smashed a lot of superstitions and promoted scientific method for discovering the truth.

This process led to a lot of discoveries of scientific laws which governed the natural phenomena as well as invention of new tools and implements which revolutionized the methods of production, transport and communication. It also opened up new areas of human settlement, expanding business and industry. Impact of the scientific revolution manifested itself in the intellectual sphere as the Enlightenment; and in the economic sphere as the Industrial Revolution.

ROLE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In European history, Enlightenment stands for a general intellectual movement of eighteenth-century France, Germany and Great Britain. It was a period when people's religious and political life was set free from obscure and orthodox beliefs and new light was shed on the conduct of human affairs. This led to the growth of a new outlook, informed by reason and committed to the authority of scientific research and discovery. Old superstitions were discarded, old fears were dispelled, and a new faith in the knowledge obtained by scientific method was developed. This movement was inspired by John Locke (1632-1704) and David Hume (1711-76) in England, by G.E. Lessing (1729-81) in Germany, and by Voltaire (1694-1778), Denis Diderot (1713-84), Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717-83) and other contributors to the French Encyclopaedia in France.

The idea that science would produce useful knowledge for the betterment of mankind was as old as science itself, yet the close connection between science and human progress was fully established during the period of Enlightenment. It was now realized that mankind could use the scientific method to establish a rational world in which the dream of human fulfilment would be materialized. In late-eighteenth century, the optimism of the times was summed up by Marquis de Condorcet (1743-94) in terms of political freedom. Looking back upon the victories of the scientific revolution, Condorcet predicted a future in which further scientific progress would render both tyrants and slaves obsolete.

IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE

In late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, scientific humanism found a new source of support from the exponents of social science, particularly in Great Britain. Graham Wallas (1858-1932), a British social scientist, attacked both 'intellectualism' and 'anti-intellectualism' as inimical to humanity. Intellectualism embodied a tendency to exaggerate the importance of reason in politics. It was professed by the champions of capitalism who maintained that the competitive forces that resulted from rational individuals pursuing their own selfish ends were directed by an 'invisible hand' toward an equitable distribution of wealth. In practice, this meant the unrestricted operation of a free market which led to the concentration of wealth in fewer hands. In such a situation, reason was all important, with no space for feelings, emotions or compassion for the poor who were the victims of this system.

Anti-intellectualism, on the other hand, was promoted by the 'philosophers of habit' who were unaware of the new science of psychology, and who held positions of authority in society, *e.g.* mothers, fathers, teachers, preachers, military generals, captains of industry, and so on. They unwittingly exploited the ignorance and fear of the masses by perpetuating and reinforcing habitual modes of thinking that supported the evils of capitalism and denigrated human dignity. Wallas warned that habitual thoughts slowly eat away the moral fabric of a democratic society. For example, those used to thinking of women in terms of home and hearth perpetuated the myth that women are by nature unsuited for any kind of political participation, including the right to vote. Similarly some philosophers of habit

held that poverty of people was the outcome of their indolence. Wallas urged that such beliefs must be set aside for achieving the goals of socialism.

Wallas sought to rely on science, particularly the social science, in order to dispel all false beliefs about human nature and social system. He advocated amassing of statistical data to bring the errors of people's habitual half-conscious assumptions to light. This would also explode the myths of racial, ethnic and sexual superiority. People would then come to the conclusion that the only economic system logically compatible with democracy was socialism.

VIII
RADICAL HUMANISM

Another variety of humanism, called 'radical humanism', was introduced by M.N. Roy (1886-1954), modern Indian political thinker. He also described it as *"New Humanism'* as well as *'Scientific Humanism'*. Roy was a national revolutionary who belonged to the first generation of Indian communists. He also participated in the communist movement in different countries, but returned to India where he evolved his new political philosophy.

CONCEPT OF RADICAL HUMANISM

Roy's concept of new humanism or radical humanism was outlined in a number of his works, particularly in *The Problem of Freedom* (1945); *New Humanism : A Manifesto* (1947); *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1948). The keynote of Roy's radical humanism is an urge for human freedom which implies the relization of his creative faculties. Ignorance is the biggest obstacle in the way to human freedom. Scientific knowledge alone can help to restore this freedom.

In his essay on 'New Humanism' in *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1948), Roy observed that scientific knowledge liberates man from the time-honoured prejudices about the essence of his being and the purpose of life. Man is essentially a rational being. His nature is not to believe, but to question, to inquire and to know. When he gropes in the darkness of ignorance, he remains a helpless victim of superstitions and the fear of extra-terrestrial powers. He holds a blind faith in the forces beyond his comprehension and control until knowledge illuminates his path. When the light of truth makes his innate rationality more manifest, he can discard old hypotheses based on ignorance.

New humanism, according to Roy, proclaims the sovereignty of man on the authority of modem science, which has dispelled all mystery about the essence of man. It maintains that a rational and moral society is possible because man is by nature a rational being. His rational nature prompts him to be moral, not under any compulsion, but voluntarily. In other words, the source of morality is embedded in human nature itself.

Roy comes to the conclusion that for creating a new world of liberty and social justice, revolution must go beyond economic reorganization of society. As the

urge for freedom is the basic incentive of life, the purpose of all rational human endeavour must be to strive for removal of those social conditions which restrict the unfolding of the potentialities of man. New humanism focuses on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world. As a thinking being he can play this role only as an individual, not as a cog in the machine of social organization.

Roy points out that the brain, as an instrument of thought, is owned individually. It cannot be possessed collectively. Revolutions are heralded by iconoclastic ideas conceived by gifted individuals. A group of such gifted individuals, determined to restore the individual in his position of primacy and dignity, can show the way to tide over the contemporary crisis of modern civilization.

Roy holds that education is indispensable to achieving the goal of new humanism or radical humanism. It makes the individual conscious of his potentialities, helps him to think rationally and promotes his critical faculties. Educated electorate of 'sufficiently high general cultural level' is the precondition of a successful democracy so that people can think for themselves and not be swayed by demagogic appeals to base emotions. Roy maintains that education of the citizen will be conducive to common progress and prosperity without encroaching on the freedom of the individual. As he observed :

> New Humanism advocates a social reconstruction of the world as a commonwealth and fraternity of free men, by the cooperative endeavour of spiritually emancipated moral men.

Under this system, boundaries of national states will gradually disappear under the impact of a new Renaissance. In short, new humanism or radical humanism as enunciated by M.N. Roy projects a vision of emancipated world community where human awakening and human dignity will reign supreme.

ATTACK ON MARXISM

Roy's commitment to radical humanism not only led to his departure from Marxism but also to an attack on Marxism. Marxism was based on the theory of economic determinism. It means that the economic structure of society, that is the mode of material production comprises the base or foundation of the social structure while legal and political institutions, religion, morals and other forms of social consciousness constitute its superstructure. Marxists believe that any change in the base results in corresponding changes in the superstructure. Roy asserted that the theory of economic determinism blasts the foundation of human freedom. In Marxist theory, mode of production included forces of production as well as relations of production. Forces of production included means of production as well as labour power. Roy pointed out that the means of production were themselves a creation of human mind. How could they determine the forms of human consciousness? Roy maintained that revolutionary changes are created by the force of ideas which constitute the human will, and not only by changes in the means of production. As he asserted : "Man the creator of machines is greater than the means of production."

Then, Marxism regards socialism as the ideology of the proletariat. Roy does

not accept this position. He argued that intellectual and cultural backwardness of the proletariat does not permit them to have a long-distance view. Marx and Engels, the founders of this philosophy, themselves came from the middle class. Lenin realized that proletariat itself could not serve as a revolutionary force. So he assigned the task of leading the revolution to 'vanguard of the proletariat' which represented the intellectual *elite*. However, this *elite* established its own dictatorship and eulogized it as 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Roy asserted that the dictatorship created a system of political domination, cultural regimentation and economic enslavement. Moreover, any form of dictatorship tends to perpetuate itself.

Marxism believed that the state will 'wither away' after the emergence of a classless society. Roy maintained that the state represents the political organization of society. It cannot cease to exist after the abolition of class distinctions. As long as communists stay in power in the name of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', they will not allow the state to 'wither away'. Individual freedom will remain crushed under their feet.

IX
ECOLOGICAL HUMANISM

The term 'ecological humanism' is again used in different contexts. Of these, two are particularly important: (*a*) Relation between nature and human being; and (*b*) Relation between rich and poor nations.

RELATION BETWEEN NATURE AND HUMAN BEING

Ecology is broadly defined as 'the science of relations between organisms and their environment'. Ecological perspective in political philosophy is concerned with a substantive morality and a political programme inspired by the perception of the existence of an ecological system. It is particularly critical of the current human practice causing damage to ecological system. It seeks to restore harmony between man and nature.

In short, ecological perspective divides the universe between nature and human being. The recognition of this division gives rise to two streams of moral and political philosophy: (*a*) Naturalism; and (*b*) Humanism. Naturalism insists on the primacy of nature including non-human living beings. Humanism, on the other hand, believes in the primacy of human being.

The advocates of naturalism have developed a political philosophy called 'eco-centrism' which demands that human efforts should focus on maintaining the nature in its original form. It denies any value-based division between human and non-human nature. It does not recognize the claim that human beings are the sole bearers of intrinsic value or that they possess greater intrinsic value than non-human nature. In its view, science should be used for understanding nature and its laws; human beings should live in accordance with these laws ; they should

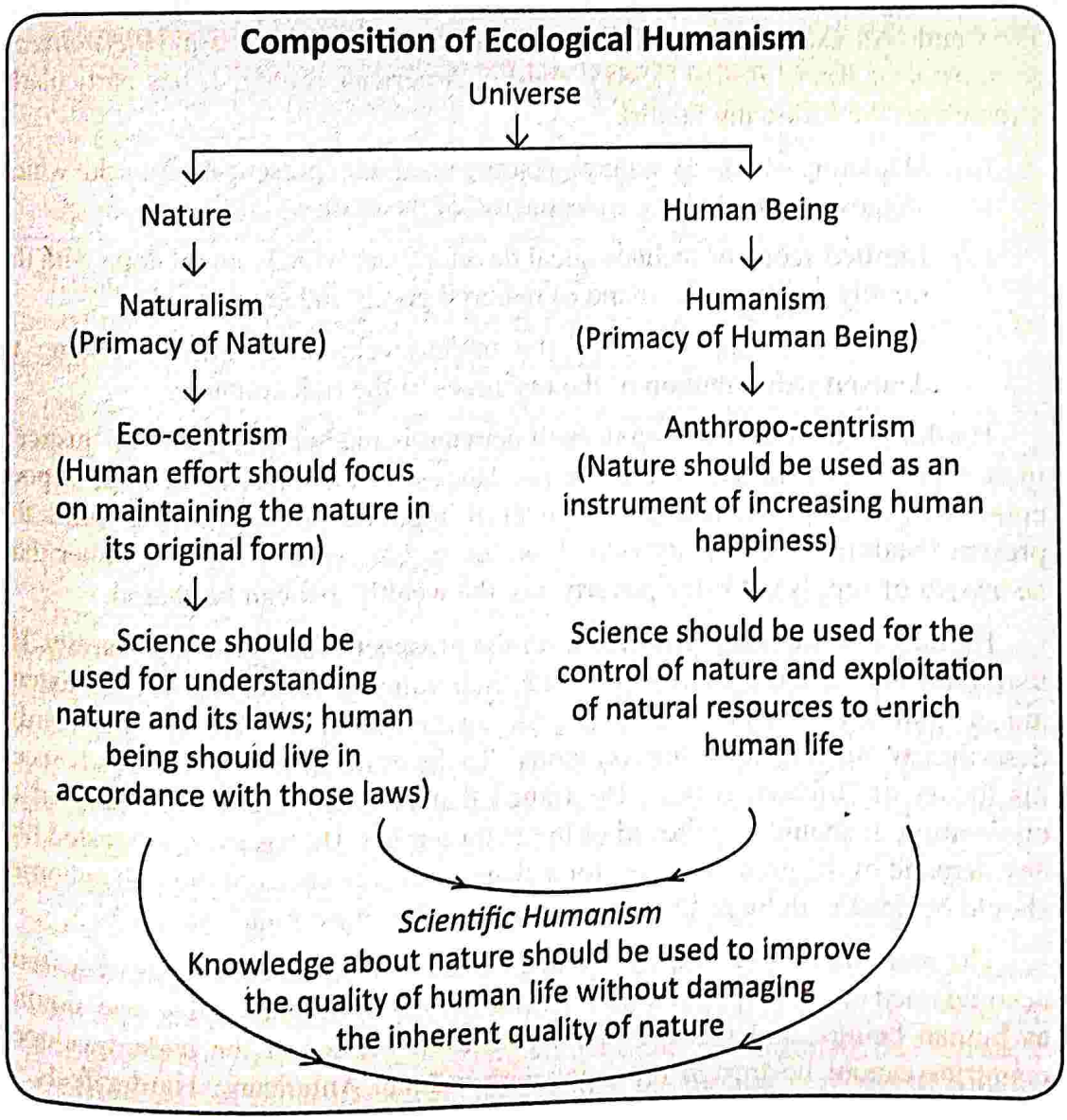
abstain from causing any damage to nature for their own gratification.

Intrinsic and Instrumental Values

When something is desired, aimed at or commended purely for its own sake, rather than as a means to anything else, *i.e.* as an end-in-itself (*e.g.* the truth, the good, the beautiful), it represents an intrinsic value. On the other hand, when something is commended because it serves as a means to another end (*e.g.* natural resources, energy and planning), it represents an instrumental value.

The adherents of humanism, or ecological humanism, have developed a contrary view called 'anthropo-centrism'. It holds that nature should be used as an instrument of increasing human happiness. It recognizes the value-based division between human and non-human nature. It claims that human beings are the sole bearers of intrinsic value or possess greater intrinsic value than non-human nature. It demands to employ the resources of the natural world only for serving human ends. In its view, science should be used for the control of nature and exploitation of natural resources to enrich human life.

Composition of Ecological Humanism


Universe
Nature
Naturalism
(Primacy of Nature)
Eco-centrism
(Human effort should focus on maintaining the nature in its original form)
Science should be used for understanding nature and its laws; human being should live in accordance with those laws)
Human Being
Humanism
(Primacy of Human Being)
Anthropo-centrism
(Nature should be used as an instrument of increasing human happiness)
Science should be used for the control of nature and exploitation of natural resources to enrich human life
Scientific Humanism
Knowledge about nature should be used to improve the quality of human life without damaging the inherent quality of nature

It is important to note that some enlightened champions of anthropo-centrism argue that the alleged dichotomy between naturalism and humanism is not grounded on reason. They focus on the interdependence of human and non-human nature. In their view, anthropo-centric ethics is adequate to suggest the need to protect the natural environment very carefully. Significance of the natural world for human beings cannot be understood merely in economic-instrumental terms. *When it is realized that the protection of the natural world is essential for maintaining congenial conditions for human life and human happiness, the goal of anthropo-centrism tends to coincide with that of eco-centrism.* This approach results in the evolution of a common moral framework for the two streams of political philosophy. Interestingly, this approach is also sometimes described as *'Scientific Humanism'.*

RELATION BETWEEN RICH AND POOR NATIONS

Another version of 'ecological humanism' represents a humanist response to the stiff attitude of rich countries of the world toward poor countries in the matter of sharing the limited resources of the earth. The attitude of the rich countries in this behalf is represented by Garrett Hardin, 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science,* 1968 and 'An Ecolate View of Human Predicament', reprinted in *Alternatives : A Journal of World Policy* (1981). Hardin, American ecologist, has particularly stressed on the following factors :

(*a*) Depleting stock of natural resources of the present-day world which suggests limited 'carrying capacity' of the earth ;

(*b*) Limited scope of technological development which cannot cope with the rapidly increasing demand of material goods and services ; and

(*c*) Multiplying population of the underdeveloped countries, tending to demand redistribution of the resources of the rich countries.

Hardin argued out that though such demand is made in the name of 'justice', in fact it emanates from a feeling of envy. He asserted that any concession to poor countries by the rich would involve overall impoverishment, because under the present conditions of scarcity (which is due to *longages* of demand rather than *shortages* of supply), it is the poverty, not the wealth, that can be shared.

Hardin sees 'human predicament' in the prospect of the growing scarcity. He maintains that if rich countries part with their valuable resources, or even extend aid or 'soft loans' to poor countries, they would meet the fate of what Hardin describes as 'the tragedy of the commons'. To illustrate his point, Hardin advanced his theory of 'lifeboat ethics'. He argued that in order to save this lifeboat of civilization, it should be relieved of the extra burden. He has even suggested that any demand of the poor countries for a share in the resources of the rich countries should be dealt with by military force (he describes it as 'police action').

The main thrust of Hardin's argument is that under the conditions of scarcity accompanied by 'overpopulation', human beings lose their value and dignity as human beings, and that the poverty-stricken masses of the underdeveloped countries cannot be treated on a par with affluent Americans. Hardin feels so

deeply concerned with the future of human civilization that he shows a contempt toward past history. It is a different matter that Hardin identifies the luxurious and wasteful American life-style as the bulwark of human civilization! Any reference to the history of the present civilization does not at all suit Hardin's 'ecological politics'.

Hardin holds the poor and oppressed people of the third world solely responsible for their present plight. He conveniently ignores the fact that the foundations of a magnificent Western civilization of the present-day developed world were laid on the colonial and neo-colonial exploitation of the underdeveloped world. While Hardin's concern for an urgent population control in the third world is quite understandable, his insistence on the developed countries' absolute right to the riches of the world does not stand to reason. Instead of evolving a strategy of balanced development of human civilization Hardin suggests a strategy of the liquidation of humanity!

Third World

Third World refers to those countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America who were victims of colonial exploitation in the past and are still characterized by a low level of economic and political development as compared to industrially advanced nations of the world. They have adopted different types of constitutions, including the Western type or socialist type, in order to cope with the problems of nation-building and economic development. Broadly speaking, their governments are legitimized by mass enthusiasm rather than by individualism.

Hardin's arguments were critically examined by some humanist scholars who exposed their inconsistencies. Thus Rajni Kothari, eminent Indian scholar ('On Eco-Imperialism', *Alternatives*; 1981) significantly observed:

> Obsessed by his logic of the tragedy of the commons, Hardin refuses to face the tragedy that must visit the entire mankind if we refuse to evolve common solutions to common problems, which stem from massive inequities co-existing with wasteful life-styles. It is basically this which is inexorably driving us towards certain ecological disaster.

Then Christian Bay, American thinker ('On Ecology Sans Humanism', *Alternatives*; 1981), commenting on Hardin's viewpoint, wonders whether Hardin has ever heard of imperialism or neo-imperialism! He points out that first world nations had conquered and subjugated most of what is now the third world and that European settlers had driven the natives of many areas off many of their best lands. By these evictions they had secured not only lands but generations of cheap, subservient labour. The present-day developed countries continue to exploit third world countries in the contemporary world. Bay urges that the prevailing policies of the developed world must be placed in a humane context. Accordingly,

> human lives must remain, or again come to be seen as, sacred, in the sense that they are to be treasured as ends, regardless of race or creed or territorial location. Foreign aid to areas of famine and other misery must be increased considerably in order to affirm and enhance the humanity of the donors as

well as the recipients.

Bay comes to the conclusion that the foreign aid from the rich to the poor countries is tantamount to repayment of debts owed to the descendants of their ancestors' victims. More importantly, the poor countries deserve this aid because they are human and their needs are more urgent than those of the rich countries.

In short, ecological humanism in this sense upholds the cause of social justice for the poor of the world because they are human beings!

Q. 1. What are the basic tenets of humanism? Examine Tagore's humanism as a road to freedom.

2. Write critical notes on : (*a*) Socialist Humanism; and (*b*) Scientific Humanism, and (*c*) Ecological Humanism.

3. "M.N. Roy's Radical Humanism marks a clear departure from Marx." Elucidate and comment.

11

Principle of Secularism

I
WHAT IS SECULARISM?

> One infinite religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this religion is expressing itself in various countries in various ways.
>
> ....
>
> All religions are different expressions of the same truth.
>
> Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902)

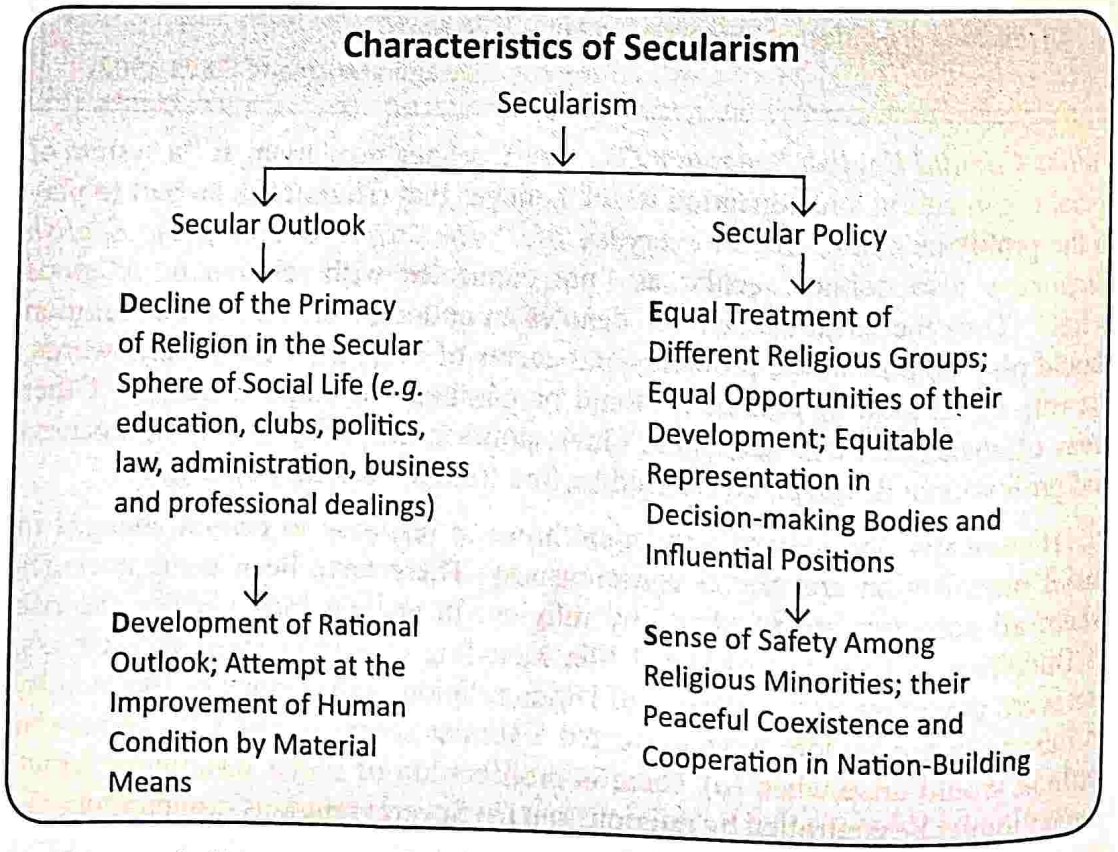
Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary defines secularism as "a system of social organization and education which believes that religion has no part to play in the problems and events of everyday life." *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* also defines secular as "not connected with religion or religious belief". Thus the term 'secularism' denotes an outlook which holds that religion should play no part in the problems and events of everyday life. In other words, the role of religion or churches should be confined to religious matters. Other areas of social life, *e.g.* education, clubs, politics, law, administration, business and professional dealings, etc. should be free from the primacy of religion.

Historically, the idea of secularism arose in response to certain changes in social organization and social consciousness. There have been some societies where all activities are regulated by religion. In ancient India, before the rise of Buddhism, all spheres of social life, including education, politics, business, etc. were governed by the dictates of Hindu religion. Ascendancy of Christianity in Europe in the Middle Ages presented a similar scenario. The need of secular outlook would arise when (*a*) There is proliferation of social institutions which can no longer be controlled by religion; and (*b*) Several religious groups appear in the same country and the prevalent feeling is that they are entitled to equal respect and equal opportunity.

In short, secularism is inspired by a sense of justice which tends to prevent

discrimination between the adherents of different religions living together. If discrimination is practised between the followers of the same religion, as under the caste system among Hindus, its removal will be an issue of social reform, and not of secularism. But if some members of such religious community become converts to other religions, *e.g.* Buddhism, Christianity, Islam or Sikhism, then the question of extending equal treatment to them would become an issue of secularism. Again, if adherents of different religions are living together, but the dominant religious community is not bothered to extend equal treatment to the followers of other religions, then there is little chance of the growth of secularism. The situation that prevailed in the ancient Rome is the case in point.

Since *secularism* insists on determining rights and duties of citizens on the basis of their status as human beings, and not on the basis of their membership of particular religious groups, it *is akin to the principle of humanism.* Again, since secularism attempts to evolve such principles of human behaviour that are based on rational knowledge and experience rather than theology and belief in supernatural elements, it coincides with rational outlook. It seeks to improve the human condition by material means alone which is the function of the state, and not of church. Secularism, therefore, demands independence of the state from church, the state holding a position of religious neutrality rather than pursuing an anti-religious philosophy.


Characteristics of Secularism
Secularism
Secular Outlook
Secular Policy
Decline of the Primacy of Religion in the Secular Sphere of Social Life (e.g. education, clubs, politics, law, administration, business and professional dealings)
Equal Treatment of Different Religious Groups; Equal Opportunities of their Development; Equitable Representation in Decision-making Bodies and Influential Positions
Development of Rational Outlook; Attempt at the Improvement of Human Condition by Material Means
Sense of Safety Among Religious Minorities; their Peaceful Coexistence and Cooperation in Nation-Building

In a nutshell, *a secular state or society is one in which all issues are judged on rational grounds rather than on the basis of their conformity to religious beliefs, authorities institutions or traditions.* Religion in such a society is treated as a matter of personal faith, and not a ground for discrimination between different

individuals or groups. The state does not interfere in religious affairs and practices unless they involve an inhuman practice or pose a threat to public safety, morals, etc. It is hoped that equal treatment of all religious groups would ensure equal freedom and equal opportunities of development for all citizens; and their equitable representation in decision-making bodies and influential positions will give a sense of safety to religious minorities, and win cooperation of all religious groups in the task of nation-building.

> The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.
>
> Lord Acton

II
PROCESS OF SECULARIZATION

When a society adopts secular attitude, this process is described as 'secularization'. According to B.R. Wilson *(Contemporary Transformations of Religion* ; 1976), secularization refers to the ways in which religious thinking, practice and institutions lose their social significance. It implies the decline of the prestige and power of religious teachers, stopping of state support for religious bodies, discontinuation of religious teaching in the national schools, and of religious tests for appointment to public office. It also means abolition of censorship or control of literature, science and other intellectual activities in order to safeguard religion.

Secularization is a part of the process of modernization because modern outlook coincides with rational outlook. Exponents of political modernization have recognized 'secularization of culture' as an essential step in the direction of modernization. This implies the process by which people gradually adopt more rational, empirical and analytical outlook in their political thinking and action. In particular, it requires transition from lower to higher levels of political culture.

Political culture stands for those aspects of the culture of a community— including its values, beliefs and norms— which lend legitimacy to its political institutions and ruling classes, and determine the status of an individual *vis-à-vis* those institutions and classes. Political culture is a non-institutional element which may sustain certain political institutions and may fail to sustain others. For instance, a culture upholding human equality will be more conducive to sustaining democracy than that based on 'caste system' or the one upholding ancestor worship or 'divine right' of kingship.

Legitimacy

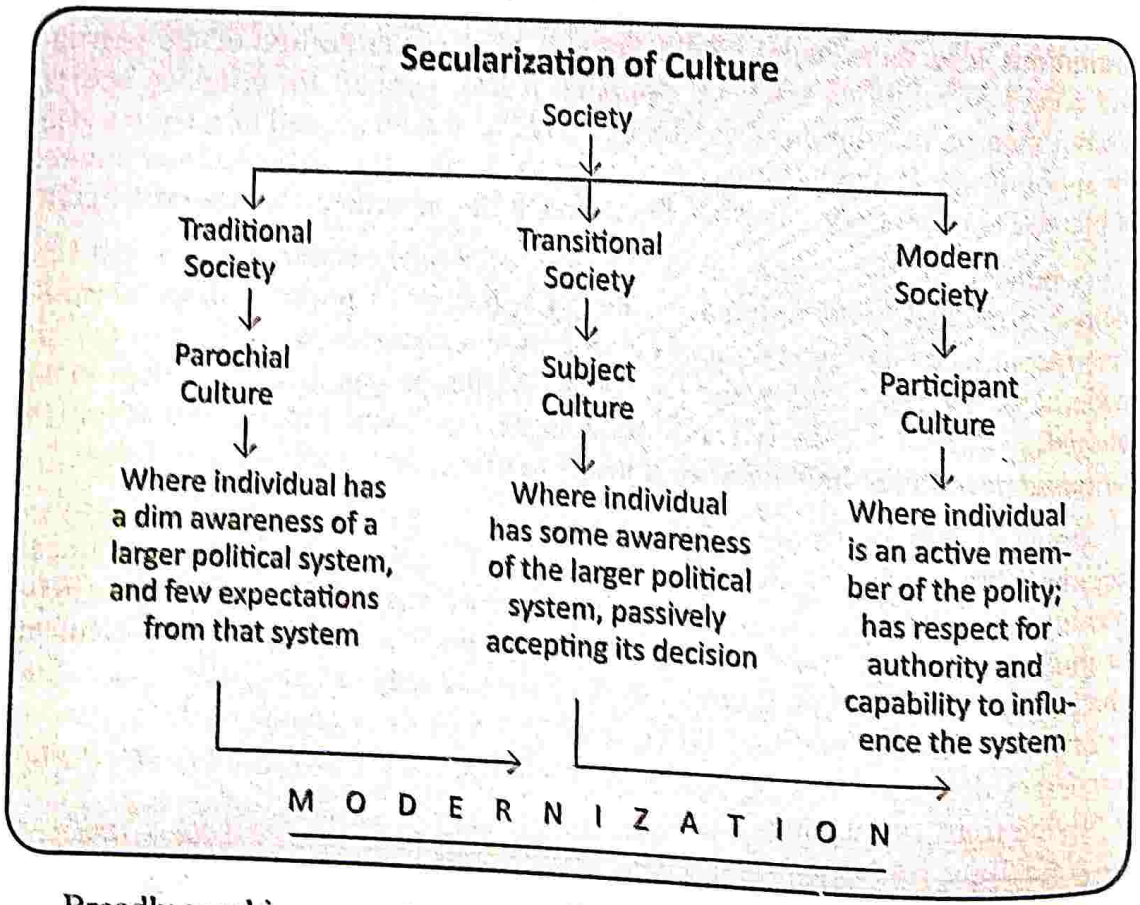
Legitimacy refers to the quality of an act or arrangement which is regarded as lawful by those affected by it. In other words, they regard it reasonable and beneficial for themselves as well as for the larger society.

Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, in their celebrated study *The Civic Culture* (1963), have identified three types of political culture, although in actual practice these may not be found in pure form. In fact, these are the three levels of political culture representing its lower and higher forms on the scale of modernization:

(*a*) *Parochial Culture*: It is found in a community where individual has a very dim awareness of the existence of a larger political system beyond the village or the tribal group. There are no specialized political roles, and few expectations of change in the political system;

(*b*) *Subject Culture*: It is found in a community where individual is aware of the existence of a larger political system but remains essentially passive and quietly accepts its decisions. It is characterized by a relatively high frequency or orientations towards a differentiated political system beyond one's local world and toward administrative structures of the system. However, there is practically no political participation; and

(*c*) *Participant Culture*: It is the characteristic of a community in which individual is an active member of the polity. It involves respect for authority, combined with individual independence and the acceptance of legitimacy of the political system with the belief that an individual can and should influence the system.


Secularization of Culture
Society
Traditional Society
Parochial Culture
Where individual has a dim awareness of a larger political system, and few expectations from that system
Transitional Society
Subject Culture
Where individual has some awareness of the larger political system, passively accepting its decision
Modern Society
Participant Culture
Where individual is an active member of the polity; has respect for authority and capability to influence the system
MODERNIZATION

Broadly speaking, *a traditional society is characterized by parochial culture; a transitional society by subject culture; and a modern society by participant culture*. The process of modernization involves transition from traditional to modern society via transitional society. It implies individual's increasing concern

with and response to the larger political system. It is the process by which an individual—who was initially indifferent to politics—is gradually drawn into the political process as an increasingly conscious and responsive participant.

III
SECULARISM IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Indian culture has been eulogized for long for its secular outlook. However, the question whether India has established a secular state after her independence remained a subject of debate for quite some time. The original version of the Indian Constitution (1950) nowhere described it as a secular state. The probable reason was the absence of agreement regarding the definition of the term 'secular state'. The framers of the Indian Constitution made elaborate provisions for the protection of the rights of religious and cultural minorities, yet they felt that the conflicting interpretations of the term 'secular' might prove inadequate to deal with the Indian situation. It was only in 1976 that the term 'Secular State' was inserted in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution when secularism was specifically defined as *'sarva dharma samabhava'* (that is equal regard for all religions) in keeping with the Indian tradition. It is important to note that no changes were made in Articles 25 to 28 of the Constitution ('Right to Freedom of Religion') at that time as these provisions were considered to be sufficient to achieve the goal of secularism as now defined.

Article 25 provides that subject to public order, morality and health...all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion. However, this provision shall not prevent the State from making any law regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; or providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus. The reference to Hindus is also applicable to those professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion. The Sikhs were allowed the wearing and carrying of *kirpan* (a small dagger) which comprises a symbol of their faith. Accordingly, Indian citizens are entitled to full freedom to profess and practise their religion; the State can regulate only their economic, financial, political or other secular activities associated with their religious practice, or impose any restrictions on their religious practice in the interests of public order, public morality and public health, or social justice.

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

Article 26 guarantees freedom of religious minorities to manage their religious affairs. It provides that subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right: (*a*) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (*b*) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (*c*) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (*d*) to administer such property in accordance with law. Accordingly, any restrictions on religious minorities in the matter of management of their religious institutions can be imposed only in the interests of public order, public morality and public health.

Article 27 provides that no person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination. It means that the state revenue shall not be diverted to the promotion of any particular religion. In practice it means that if state assistance is given to any particular religious group, it will be equitably distributed among different religious groups.

Equitable Distribution

Equitable distribution implies the distribution of benefits among various claimants in such a way that each group gets according to its relative need. This does not rule out the fixing of a minimum share for each claimant, and allocating a relatively larger share for those whose need is more urgent.

Finally, Article 28 provides that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. However, if an educational institution is administered by the State but it was established under any endowment or trust requiring the imparting of religious instruction therein, then such instruction may be allowed to continue. Again, no person attending any educational institution recognized by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to attend religious instruction or take part in religious worship without his or his guardian's consent. It means that attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in any educational institution recognized or administered by the State shall not be compulsory for any one. This provision supplements the freedom of conscience guaranteed to every Indian citizen.

Thus Articles 25 to 28 of the Indian Constitution, which occur in the chapter on Fundamental Rights, provide for a sound framework for the citizens' right to freedom of religion. Justice Ayyangar of the Supreme Court of India, in his concurring judgment in *(Sardar) Syedna Taher Saifuddin Saheb v. State of Bombay* case (1962), has significantly observed:

> These articles embody the principle of religious toleration that has been the characteristic feature of Indian civilization from the start of history.... Besides they serve to emphasize the secular nature of Indian Democracy which the founding fathers considered should be the very basis of the Constitution.

So the Supreme Court of India affirmed the secular nature of Indian democracy as early as 1962 when the term 'secular' was not yet included in the

Indian Constitution. It is interesting to recall that V.P. Luthera (*The Concept of the Secular State and India* ; 1964) came up with a thesis that India did not establish a secular state. He interpreted secularism as freedom of the church (*i.e.* any religious organization) in its internal religious affairs from regulation and control by the State. He argued that the Constitution of India did not create two spheres, one pertaining to the State and the other to the Church, in which both were independent of each other. On the contrary, the Constitution vested immense powers in the State over the affairs of the religious bodies which had to administer their institutions, including places of worship, in accordance with laws passed by the State. The State could also give direct or indirect financial aid to religious institutions.

Luthera largely relied on the European concept of secularism which contemplates that the State shall not concern itself with religion. In this sense, Indian state was not a secular state. But American concept of secularism does not accept this position. It recognizes crucial value of religion in human life. As C. Rajgopalachari *(Our Democracy and Other Essays*; 1967) observed:

> The European concept of the 'secular' State is... hostile to religion, starting out of a feeling that religion is a political nuisance and that religious belief is a threat to political unity and stable Government. The American concept of the 'secular' State, on the other hand, is grounded in a firm belief in the incomparable value of the religious life...The Indian concept of a 'secular' State is nearer to the American than to the European. The Constitution did not intend to discourage or undervalue the place of religion in society. It placed all denominations and creeds on a religious basis without reference to their following.

India with a population exceeding 120 crores includes 82.41% Hindus, 11.67% Muslims, 2.32% Christians, 1.99% Sikhs, 0.77% Buddhists, 0.41% Jains and 0.43% others. Indians are largely religious-minded and devoted to their respective religions. Thus religion plays an important role in their life. However, most Indians treat their religion a matter of personal faith. In the field of education, business, professional life, entertainment, etc. people freely mix up with the followers of different religions. However, in the sphere of politics, people sometimes show loyalty towards their co-religionists.

The Indian Constitution makes a distinction between religious belief, religious practice and management of religious affairs. There is a perfect freedom of religious belief. There is also sufficient freedom of religious practices except when they run counter to public order, public morality and public health. But the Constitution contemplates proper regulation of activities which are economic, financial or political in their character though they are associated with religious practices. In the *Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras v. L. T. Swamiar* case (1954), the Supreme Court of India held that "only those practices are protected by Article 26 (b) which are regarded by the religion in question as its essential and integral part...Whether a religious practice is an essential part of a religion is an objective question to be determined by the Court; the view of the religious denomination itself is not final." Then, in *Sri Venkataramanaswami Temple* case the then High Court of Madras expressed the view that though a

particular religious community has the right to manage its own affairs (Article 26), "the power of the State to make a law for throwing open Hindu religious institutions of a public character as contemplated in Article 25(2) of the Constitution is not in any way circumscribed, restricted or whittled down by the provisions of Article 26(b). The right of a religious denomination to manage its own affairs is different from the right to practise a religion".

If any of the religious practices is found to involve injustice toward any section, it must give way to reform. Such reform being in the larger interest of society, particularly being beneficial to the underprivileged sections of the followers of the religion concerned, cannot be considered as the curtailment of the freedom of religion. The law providing for social welfare and reform in the matter of religious practices may cover wide-ranging activities, but the question of throwing open Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus engaged special attention of the Constitution-makers. It was directed against the inhuman practice of Untouchability then widely prevalent among Hindus.

Untouchability

Untouchability refers to a widespread practice of orthodox Hindu society under which certain outcaste Hindus were treated as untouchable by the caste Hindus; their touch was believed to pollute the caste Hindus; they were refused entry into temples, and were not allowed to use common wells, ponds, inns and other common services.

However, in spite of sufficient legal and constitutional safeguards for the religious minorities of India, some sections of the population have failed to evolve a truly secular outlook. In some pockets communal feelings are sometimes stimulated which result in communal riots, particularly Hindu-Muslim riots which pose a perpetual threat to the unity and integrity of the nation. Sometimes such riots are engineered by certain vested interests for some political gain. Some anti-social elements resort to fundamentalism and obscurantism in order to divert people's attention from their illegal and immoral activities. Such moves are disastrous for the health of the nation and must be curbed vigorously.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism refers to an extremely orthodox view of religion which regards the contents of its scripture to be literally true, and firmly adheres to its teachings. So it accepts the description of supernatural events and divine miracles included in the scripture with full faith. It does not recognize any scientific knowledge that contradicts the contents of the scripture.

In politics, votaries of fundamentalism adopt extremist attitude and show intense hatred and intolerance toward the followers of other religions.

Obscurantism

Obscurantism refers to an approach, policy or practice of deliberately making things vague or obscure so that people are unable to attain true knowledge of the real world. It believes in concealing the truth and preventing its knowledge to reach the ordinary people who continue to be guided by irrational beliefs and superstitions.

A multi-religious and multi-cultural society like India can emerge as a strong nation only through national integration. National integration requires that the people belonging to different races, religions, regions, languages and cultures—whether they are in majority or in minority—forget their differences, live together in harmony, show respect to each other's religion, language, culture, sacred symbols and sacred places, and identify themselves as parts of one nation. They should feel equally concerned with national problems, equally proud of their national heritage and history, and extend their full cooperation in the task of nation-building. However, national integration does not call for the minorities' 'assimilation' into a uniform culture. Instead they should feel safe with their typical identities. Frank Anthony (*Hindustan Times Republic Day Supplement,* 1970) defined assimilation as asking a minority community for "effacing its distinctive attributes as an entity". It is important to note that when protagonists of Hindu majority tend to equate *Hindutva* with national identity and demand Muslims and other minorities to assimilate themselves with this so-called national identity, the situation becomes disastrous.

Again, if secularism is defined as neutrality of the State toward all religious communities, interests of minorities are bound to suffer in a competitive setting. A truly democratic state cannot remain indifferent to the fate of vulnerable sections. So a secular-democratic state in a multi-religious and multi-cultural society should aim at:

(*a*) Removal of injustice to any individual or a section of society emanating from the culture of that community; for instance, the Supreme Court of India's verdict in the *Shah Bano case* (1983) sought to restore 'gender justice'; and

(*b*) Protection of minority communities from the onslaught of a powerful majority community as evidenced in the demolition of Babari masjid (1992).

In a nutshell, only a healthy secular outlook of the Indian people and their leaders can secure justice for the people and infuse a sense of security into the minds of religious and cultural minorities.

IV
GANDHIAN VIEW OF SECULARISM

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), modern Indian social philosopher, has widely

reflected on the problems faced by the modern India. He held that in a multi-religious country like India, communal harmony was one of the most pressing problems. Gandhian view of secularism may be regarded as a positive response to this situation.

Gandhi realized that the Indians are largely religious-minded. He paid a rich tribute to the role of religion in human emancipation when he wrote in his *Autobiography* (*My Experiments With Truth*; 1929) :

> ...My devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

For Gandhi, adherence to religion was the part of his pursuit of truth. This very pursuit induced him to participate in politics which culminated in India's independence from the foreign yoke. He believed that politics bereft of religion was nothing short of a death trap which kills the soul. Though he declared himself to be a devout Hindu and eulogized the time-honoured Hindu religion *(sanatana dharma),* yet he focused on the essence of all religions which sought to make a man virtuous in their own ways. As Gandhi observed :

> By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker
> *(The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi,* compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao; 1945).

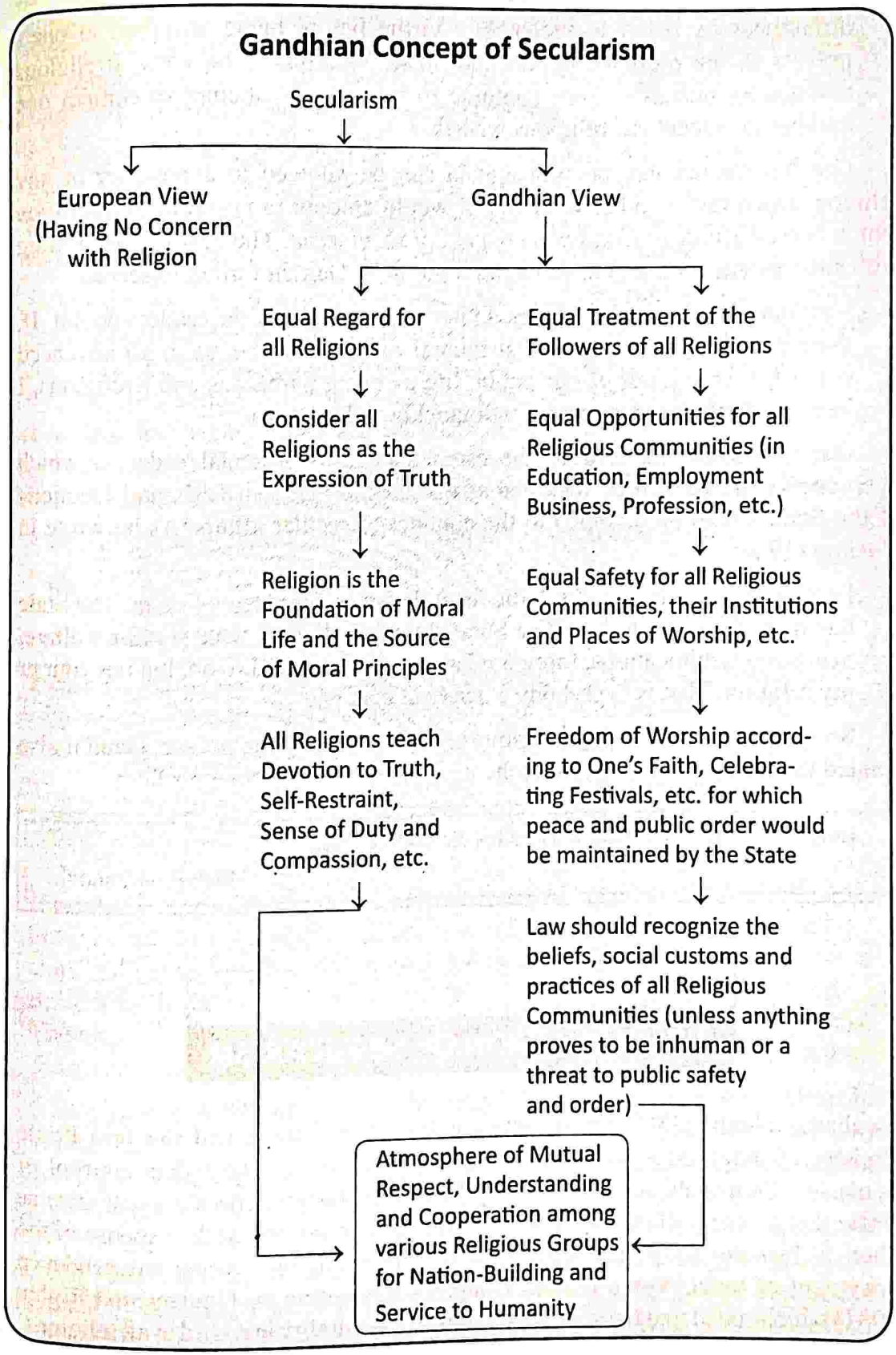
In spite of his firm faith in Hindu religion, Gandhi devoted himself to the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which purifies everyone. Different religions are only outwardly different but they are identical in their essence. As Gandhi argued:

> Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals
> (*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose; 1948).

Gandhi came to the conclusion that if a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of the others too. Gandhi strongly condemned the idea of treating religion as a divisive force in a multi-religious society. He maintained that so long as there are different religions, every one of them may need some distinctive symbol. But when the symbol is made into a fetish and an instrument of proving the superiority of one's religion over other's, it is fit only to be discarded.

Gandhian view of secularism may be expressed in one word : *'equal respect for all religions'*. Each religion is inspired by faith in God. Gandhi believed that in God's house there are many mansions and they are equally holy. Gandhi showed equal veneration toward all places of worship though they may belong to different religions:

Temples or mosques or churches... I make no distinction between these different abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen
(The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao; 1945).


Gandhian Concept of Secularism
Secularism
European View (Having No Concern with Religion
Gandhian View
Equal Regard for all Religions
Consider all Religions as the Expression of Truth
Religion is the Foundation of Moral Life and the Source of Moral Principles
All Religions teach Devotion to Truth, Self-Restraint, Sense of Duty and Compassion, etc.
Equal Treatment of the Followers of all Religions
Equal Opportunities for all Religious Communities (in Education, Employment Business, Profession, etc.)
Equal Safety for all Religious Communities, their Institutions and Places of Worship, etc.
Freedom of Worship according to One's Faith, Celebrating Festivals, etc. for which peace and public order would be maintained by the State
Law should recognize the beliefs, social customs and practices of all Religious Communities (unless anything proves to be inhuman or a threat to public safety and order)
Atmosphere of Mutual Respect, Understanding and Cooperation among various Religious Groups for Nation-Building and Service to Humanity

Gandhi largely relied on evolving secular outlook in this sense among the Indians in order to secure communal harmony and national unity in this country. He asserted that the respect for each other's religion should come from conviction, and not from compulsion. As he wrote in *Young India* (1931) :

> Hindus and Musalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence... Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall... be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes.

Gandhi insisted that no propaganda can be allowed to a preacher of any religion which reviles other religions. It would amount to negation of *toleration* which *is the keynote of Gandhian concept of secularism*. The best way of dealing with such propaganda was to condemn it publicly. Gandhi further observed:

> I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

Gandhi looked forward to the establishment of a social order in which everyone's religion will be regarded as a matter of personal faith, and functions of the State would be confined to the conduct of secular affairs. As he wrote in *Harijan* (1946):

> I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it. The State should look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on; but not your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern.

So apart from cultivating religious toleration among the people, Gandhi also wanted the State not to interfere in the matters concerning people's faith.

> Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

V
NEHRU'S VISION OF SECULARISM

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), eminent Indian statesman and the first Prime Minister of independent India, was a great champion of the Indian concept of secularism. In a multi-religious society like India, Nehru defined secular state as a state that protects all religions but does not favour any one at the expense of the other. It does not adopt any religion as the state religion. During independence movement of India, Nehru drafted Congress Resolution on Fundamental Rights (1931) which stated that the state should observe neutrality in regard to all religions.

After independence of India when the Indian Constitution (1950) had been in force for over a decade, Nehru observed in an important speech (1961):

> We have laid down in our Constitution that India is a secular State. That does not mean irreligion. It means equal respect for all faiths and equal opportunities for those who profess any faith.

Nehru believed in a broader vision of religion which infused a moral spirit into the people of India. In *The Discovery of India* (1946), Nehru preferred to use 'dharma'— the term of Indian origin—to express this vision:

> *Dharma* really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together; it is the inmost constitution of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities.

Nehru identified religion with a sense of morality and the spirit of social service. On one occasion he quoted Albert Einstein (1879-1955), the greatest scientist of our age, as saying: "In this materialistic age of ours, the serious scientific workers are the only profoundly religious people." It implies that service to humanity is service to God. Nehru eulogized all those efforts which were devoted to the welfare of mankind. They were as salutary as devotion to God. In his speech at the opening of Nangal Canal (1954), he declared:

> These days the biggest temple and mosque and gurdwara is the place where man works for the good of mankind. Which place can be greater than this... where thousands and lakhs of men have worked, have shed their blood and sweat and laid down their lives as well?

Nehru strongly condemned those forms of religion which sow the seeds of hatred between different religious communities. In a statement made in 1936, he asserted :

> There must be the most perfect freedom of faith and observance...But when religion comes in the garb of vested interest and exploits people, it is not religion.

Hatred between different religious communities takes the form of communalism. It comes in very handy to those politicians who seek to take advantage of people's diverse religious affinities. As Nehru, in a speech in the Constituent Assembly (1948), observed:

> The alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is a most dangerous alliance, and it yields the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood.

Nehru warned that the divisions created among people by religion were largely superficial. In real sense the society as well as the world was divided into two groups : the rich and the poor. The first type of division (*i.e.* the division based on religion) was inherent in our social system, and it could be accentuated by creating hatred between people. The second type of division (*i.e.* the division based on economic status) was the product of social arrangement which could be gradually obliterated by adopting a social policy based on social justice. But an impression was created by the vested interests that people were rich or poor because of their

religious status, and that the position would change if one religious group rises in revolt against the other religious group!

In his *Glimpses of World History* (1939), Nehru gave a penetrating analysis of Hindu-Muslim tension that was prevalent in pre-independence India. He observed that people were not rich or poor because they were Hindus or Muslims respectively. The difference in their economic status was the product of historical factors. Hindus turned to English education which was a passport to government service and the professions. On the other hand, most of the weavers who had gone to the wall on account of destruction of the Indian industries by the British, were Muslims. In Bengal, which had the biggest Muslim population of any Indian province during those days, they were poor tenants or small land-holders. The landlord was usually a Hindu, and so was the village *bania* (the trader), who was the money-lender and the owner of the village store. The landlord and the *bania* were thus in a position to oppress the tenant and exploit him, and they took full advantage of this position. This was the reason why Hindus became rich and Muslims remained poor. In other words, their religious status was not responsible for their economic status. Necessary changes in economic policy could change their economic status, without changing their religion. The remedy of communal tension could be found by adopting proper economic policy, and not by instigating communal riots!

In short, Nehru dwelled at length on the significance of secular policy as well as secular outlook on the road to our national progress.

Q. 1. Define secularism. In what sense is it akin to the principle of humanism?

2. Discuss the main tenets of secularism in the context of Indian society and politics.

3. Critically examine the secular vision of Gandhi and Nehru.

12

Principle of Multiculturalism

I
WHAT IS MULTICULTURALISM?

Multiculturalism has emerged as an important principle of politics in recent decades throughout the world. Majority of nations of the world today consist of multicultural societies. In other words, they include people who belong to diverse cultural as well as ethnic groups. Apart from differences in their traditional cultures, some groups have evolved certain non-conventional intellectual and sexual perspectives. Black aesthetics, lesbian and gay pride movements are the case in point. All such groups demand due recognition as normal components of society. *The principle of multiculturalism not only extends due recognition to all such diverse groups, it also concedes that none of the cultural perspectives can be treated as inherently superior or inferior to others.* In this respect, it comes closer to postmodernism.

Cultural Group

Cultural group refers to a group of people that is identified by its typical culture. Here culture may refer to the language, region, religion as well as the set of values, beliefs, symbols, ideas, forms of behaviour, dress code, eating habits, styles of living, art and craft, etc. which the members of a group have evolved in order to streamline their social life, and thereby distinguished themselves from other groups.

Ethnic Group

Ethnic group refers to a social group whose members identify themselves as a particular group on the basis of similar physical features and similar culture (including language, religion, dress code, etc.), feel unity among themselves, and distinguish themselves from other similar groups.

Black Aesthetics

Black aesthetics refers to the set of standards of beauty and art forms that are prevalent in the culture of the black races. Historically, white races had managed to gain dominant position in a very large part of the world; their standards of beauty and art were projected as universal standards. Black races had been subjugated and their culture was looked down upon. Now these races have not only achieved independence, they have also shown that they are no less intelligent, talented and competent; their aesthetic standards are no longer considered as inferior to those of the white races.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism refers to a late twentieth-century movement in philosophy, art and literary criticism which extends to various forms of social theory including political theory. According to this view, there is no objective reality, only a plurality of perspectives; there is no genuine distinction between right and wrong, only expressions of power relations. Indeed those in power determine what is right, good and beautiful; anything not conforming to this standard is considered wrong without any logical basis of this judgement.

Postmodernism tends to reject these conventional notions born out of the power structure of society. Instead of accepting any idea or ideology as absolute truth, postmodernists believe that truth is a matter of constant search. So they turn to discourse, debate and democracy as a method of this search.

Before the advent of multiculturalism, the problem of dealing with diverse groups in society was addressed by the principle of pluralism. However, the precise implications of pluralism were not as well-defined as those of multiculturalism. In late-nineteenth century, the term 'pluralism' was applied in the United States to express the view that the distinct ethnic groups—the Jewish-Americans, Irish-Americans, and so on—should be treated as legitimate parts of the American community; their different identities should be given due recognition, and no attempt should be made to dissolve them into a 'melting pot'. This view promoted the idea of 'identity politics', which seems to be very close to the idea of multiculturalism. However, multiculturalism applies to a wider range of diverse groups including immigrants, foreign settlers and various kinds of social groups treated as 'deviant'.

(deviant = one who departs from the accepted beliefs or behaviour)

Identity Politics

Identity politics refers to a model of politics in which individuals identify themselves with certain ethnic, regional, religious and cultural groups, etc. with whom they feel naturally bound together; these groups compete or negotiate with other such groups for their share in power and in the process of decision-making. No group is forced to obliterate its identity or to merge its identity with the dominant group although all of them are bound together by the bond of loyalty to the nation.

Besides, the term pluralism was also applied to indicate the pluralist character of society, particularly of a democratic society, where different groups (like neighbourhood communities, trade unions, professional bodies, churches and a number of other voluntary associations) take care of interests of different individuals and participate in the decision-making process as authoritative organs. This view defines public policy as the outcome of negotiations between autonomous groups. Noted American writers like Robert Dahl (*Preface to Democratic Theory*; 1956) and Nelson Polsby (*Community Power and Political Theory*; 1963) upheld this view. They not only described the existing state of affairs as observed by them but also found it conducive to democracy. This view does not correspond to the tenets of multiculturalism. *Multiculturalism embodies a normative view which is meant to resolve the existing or possible conflicts between diverse cultural groups and other minorities in society.*

Multiculturalism enables different cultures within a community to flourish and treat each other with mutual respect. Some writers have argued that this is a necessary condition of individual's freedom. Thus Joseph Raz ('Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective', *Dissent*; 1994) observed that individual's autonomy is intimately tied up with access to his culture. It enables him to make good choices befitting a good life if his culture is flourishing and getting respect from others. Hence the sense of identity is closely linked with individual's self-fulfilment.

The search for identity has become a popular theme of modern literature. The concept of identity in psychological as well as sociological sense seeks to link inner world of the individual with the outer world. It serves as a bridge between individual's self and the community. *It is now widely experienced that the sense of shared community has largely eroded, leaving modern people without a clear sense of identity.* Modern society, particularly the Western society, is characterized by the absence, breakdown, confusion or conflict of the norms. In other words, an individual in this society is not sure about the shared expectations of behaviour—the behaviour that would be considered culturally desirable and appropriate. This state of 'normlessness' in society is known as 'anomie'. This results in 'breakdown of the self' which is the primary theme of many plays and novels written today.

Norms

In sociology, a norm refers to a standard or the shared expectation of behaviour that is considered culturally desirable or appropriate. Norms of a society are regarded as prescriptive like the prevalent rules and regulations, although they do not enjoy the formal status of rules. For example, looking after one's parents in the old age would be a norm though there might be no law to enforce this obligation.

This state of affairs has been viewed optimistically as well as pessimistically. *Optimists assert that modern world gives to individual a wider choice of identities and a greater opportunity of self-actualization.* He is no longer a slave of narrowly defined tradition, culture or religion, but has the opportunity to choose what appeals to his reason and taste. *Pessimists*, on the other hand, *focus on the*

problems arising from the loss of boundaries between self and culture, rise of a mass culture of estrangement, and a trend towards fragmentation, homelessness and meaninglessness. A positive contribution of these developments (in pessimistic as well as optimistic sense) has been the rise of counterculture which has opened new vistas of social thought in the contemporary world.

Estrangement

Estrangement refers to a situation in which our familiar things seem unfamiliar to us, and our friendly relations with people turn out to be hostile.

Counterculture

Counterculture refers to a set of those ideas, trends and movements which seek to challenge the very basis of values and sources of authority in modern Western culture. Actually counterculture does not refute the entire Western culture, but it tends to challenge the irrational and objectionable parts thereof. Its main target of attack is the structures of domination in society which have lost their rational basis. The chief characteristic of counterculture is the critical attitude toward the prevailing system though its own beliefs cannot be defined as a single system of thought.

Some prominent features of counterculture are: restoring the importance of women in a male-dominated society; challenging the dominance of white races and their life-styles and drawing the attention of humanity towards artistic and aesthetic sensibilities of coloured races; and exposing the greedy face behind the glamorous veil of consumer culture and motivating people toward preservation of environment.

In order to maintain peace and solidarity in a multicultural society, it is necessary that all cultural groups as defined in the wider sense, get due recognition, enjoy due respect and rights as equal citizens, and get due representation in decision-making bodies. Multiculturalism has emerged as a response to this vital demand. In a nutshell, multiculturalism implies an attitude and policy of accommodating diverse cultural groups within the national mainstream of a country. This involves action at two levels: (*a*) Different cultural groups of the country, particularly the dominant cultural group, should cultivate an attitude of toleration and accommodation toward other cultural groups in order to give them a sense of security and dignity; and (*b*) The state should secure their members' equal rights as citizens and provide for their due representation in decision-making bodies. This also implies that the existing method of representation of individuals at political level should be replaced by some method of representation of groups, particularly the cultural groups.

The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.

Lord Acton (1834-1902)

II
JUSTIFICATION OF MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism like democracy is the order of the day. *A multicultural country that fails to cultivate the spirit of multiculturalism may eventually disintegrate.* Fragmentation of Yugoslavia first into Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991-92) and later into Serbia, Montenegro (2006) and Kosovo (2008) is the case in point.

Democratic community today has immensely grown in size where small cultural groups live along with big cultural groups. It is necessary to infuse a sense of security among small cultural groups in a multicultural society. *In order to secure social justice it is necessary that the people belonging to different cultures should be given due representation in decision-making organs of government.*

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

When individuals participate in voting as a part of democratic process, it is possible that members of the cultural majority within the nation gain supremacy by virtue of their numbers. They can claim such privileges which are denied to minorities. Some groups may ignore the interests of others due to their traditional supremacy. For example, white races of the Western society may be inclined to suppress the coloured races; men all over the world may tend to oppress women.

In short, *imbalance in the representation of different groups at decision-making levels may cause offence to the sense of identity of the groups who are adversely affected.* Several political philosophers have drawn our attention to this problem and have tried to find solution thereof.

CHARLES TAYLOR'S VIEW

Canadian political philosopher Charles Taylor, in his paper on 'The Dynamics of Democratic Exclusion' in *Journal of Democracy* (1998), tried to show how the 'challenge of new arrivals' raises crucial problem for democracy. He pointed out that democratic societies are now necessarily multicultural. If they adopt the strategy of assimilation, newcomers to these societies will be constrained to downplay their particular identity in order to integrate themselves into the host culture. This state of affairs will be inimical to the spirit of democracy. In order to retain their democratic character, these societies should accept the existence of a variety of cultural and ethnic groups affirming their identity and particularity, sometimes in association with a widespread diaspora of co-nationals. If this condition is to be fulfilled, the

method of representation of various groups in a democratic polity will have to be revised thoroughly.

Assimilation

In a multicultural society, assimilation refers to the process whereby the dominant group imposes its culture so effectively on subsidiary groups that they lose their own identity and become virtually indistinguishable from the dominant culture.

Focusing on a case study of Canada, Taylor observed that in recent years attitudes in the English Canada had become steadily more rigid toward the province of Quebec, that is the French Canada whose people were aspiring to have a different status. Some Canadians felt that in consequence of rapid diversification of Canada's population, Quebec's demand for difference had often heightened a sense of fragmentation. Taylor lamented: "Canada's tragedy is that just at the moment when it is becoming more and more necessary to do something about Quebec's status in the federation, it is also becoming politically less possible to do anything meaningful."

Taylor pointed to the growing challenge of 'new arrivals' in all democratic societies. Indeed the growing pace of international migration in the contemporary world was making all societies increasingly 'multicultural'. Under the circumstances, policy of rigorous assimilation had become less and less sustainable. Moreover, feminists, cultural minorities, homosexuals and different religious groups — all wanted to be accommodated within the mainstream instead of being treated as deviant groups.

Taylor also cited the case of Hispanics in the United States who knew the advantage of becoming English-speaking Americans. Still they frequently demanded school services in Spanish which would help them to retain their original culture. They feel that the protection of their culture would have some impact on transforming the American culture itself. Earlier immigrants to Europe, particularly France, displayed a sense of gratitude toward the countries of refuge and opportunity. So they did not insist on maintaining difference. However, the 'new arrivals' in many countries do not subscribe to this view. They tend to invoke the old doctrine central to many religions, that the earth has been given to human beings in common. As a given territory does not necessarily belong to the people born in it, the immigrants are not morally bound to merge their identity with the original residents of that country.

WILL KYMLICKA'S VIEW

Will Kymlicka, another Canadian political philosopher (*Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*; 1995), addressed himself to the problem of representation of diverse groups in a democratic society. Should different groups be represented in proportion to their numbers in the population as a whole? Or, in some cases a larger number of representatives would be necessary to ensure an *effective* representation of minorities? In answer to these questions, Kymlicka advanced a theory of 'mirror representation'. Under this scheme, different cultural

and ethnic groups would be represented in the legislature by the members of their own groups. Moreover, other members of the legislature, who do not belong to these groups, shall also be accountable to represent these groups along with the groups of their origin. In short, Kymlicka sought to replace the individualist model of representation by a new model of group representation.

Kymlicka concedes that the idea of 'mirror representation' is not practicable in all cases. He raises three important questions which must be answered adequately before implementing this idea: (*a*) Which groups should be represented?; (*b*) How many seats should a group have?; and (*c*) To whom the group representatives should be held accountable? Kymlicka tries to analyse many problems arising from answering these questions.

He points out that if all groups are allowed to be represented, there will be unlimited demand for political recognition and support, and those denied of this benefit will show bitter resentment. Kymlicka concludes that only those groups should be given representation who meet one of the two criteria: (*a*) Are the members of the group subject to systemic disadvantage in the political process?; and (*b*) Do the members of the group have a claim to self-government? Kymlicka observes that self-government rights are typically demanded by national minorities. For example, in Canada, Aboriginals and Quebecois are considered to be entitled to such rights. The criteria of systemic disadvantage are more complicated. In the United States, for example, the following groups could be treated as oppressed: women, blacks, Native Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking Americans, Asian Americans, gay men, lesbians, working-class people, poor people, old people, and mentally and physically disabled people. In short, it includes everyone but relatively well-off, relatively young, able-bodied, heterosexual white males.

Kymlicka observes that not all historically disadvantaged groups are in favour of group representation strategy. Many immigrant groups would prefer to work within the existing political parties who claim to harmonize diverse interests. Such groups would be free to refuse the provision of their separate representation.

As regards the number of seats to be reserved for each group, Kymlicka considers two possibilities: (*a*) A group should be represented in proportion to its numbers in the population at large. This view follows naturally from a commitment to the general principle of mirror representation; and (*b*) The threshold number of seats necessary for effective representation can be greater than the proportional number of seats in the case of marginalized or disadvantaged groups. The first alternative, that is having the number of representatives in proportion to the number represented is not always acceptable. It is based on the assumption that, for example, only a woman can represent women and only a disadvantaged person can represent the people falling in that category. It may be conceded that competent leadership seeks to harmonize the interests of diverse groups. It is not always wise to vote on sectarian basis.

Finally, making a representative accountable only to a particular group whom he is representing in legislature is not a sound proposal. This would imply that, for example, blacks who are elected by diverse voters, would be accountable only to blacks, etc. This would upset the principle of representation of mixed people who

form various constituencies. It is not feasible to have separate constituencies of women, blacks or various minority groups. Representatives of a nation will have to be held accountable to all the cultural groups for securing social justice as well as national interest.

IRIS YOUNG'S VIEW

The assimilationist model also came under attack by an American philosopher, Iris Marion Young (*Justice and the Politics of Difference*; 1990). She argued that the assimilationist model falsely projects the norms of one group as standard and universal norms, while other groups are treated as deviant and the 'Other'. This leads to oppression of a variety of groups including 'women, Blacks, Hispanics, gay men and lesbians, and old people'. Democratic politics must fight out this tendency. It should help the oppressed people to follow their own standards and to maintain their particular identities.

Iris Marion Young (1949-2006) insists on the 'politics of difference' to secure the rights of disadvantaged cultural groups. Indeed the 'politics of identity' and the 'politics of difference' are not opposed to each other; they are two sides of the same coin. *A disadvantaged group wants to preserve its 'identity' in order to maintain its 'difference' from other groups*. Politics of difference itself implies the ideal of liberation or emancipation. It promotes 'democratic cultural pluralism'. As Iris Young elucidates: "In this vision the good society does not eliminate or transcend group difference. Rather there is equality among socially and culturally differentiated groups, who mutually respect one another and affirm one another in their differences."

Iris Young holds that the process of urbanization and modernization does not promote uniformity among diverse cultural groups. People do not usually give up their social group identifications, even when they are oppressed. Division of society into privileged and underprivileged groups continues in spite of the creation of formal equality among them. Some groups continue to be marked as deviant, or as the 'Other'. They remain the victims of exclusion, avoidance, paternalism and authoritarian treatment. Cultural differences among social groups—differences in language, style of living, body language and gestures, values and perspectives on society—still prevail. The strategy of assimilation tends to define standards according to which all will be measured. This strategy not only places the oppressed groups in a disadvantaged position, it also tends to perpetuate their disadvantage. As Iris Young has aptly illustrated in the American context: "When there is an ideal of general human standards according to which everyone should be evaluated equally, then Puerto Ricans or Chinese Americans are ashamed of their accents or their parents, Black children despise the female-dominated kith and kin networks of their neighbourhoods, and feminists seek to root out their tendency to cry, or to feel compassion for a frustrated stranger." In short, there is a pressure on all underprivileged groups to give up their identity and fall in line!

Multiculturalism rejects this demand of devaluation of one's culture and perspective as a condition of full participation in social life. Accordingly, the underprivileged should no longer be ashamed of their distinctive characteristics.

One should rather declare: "I am just what they say I am — a Jewboy, a coloured girl, a fag, a dyke, or a hag — and proud of it." When lesbians and gays and Black Americans assert their viewpoint as a part of normal behaviour, the dominant social groups are forced to review their own attitudes and stop considering the disadvantaged groups as deviant, perverted or inferior. The politics of difference tends to promote a sense of group solidarity. When political leaders of the oppressed groups reject assimilation, they are often affirming group solidarity. It gives rise to demand for group representation at policy-making level, giving opportunity to minor groups to reach the top.

Multiculturalism has a salutary affect on the dominant culture also. Traditional communities of Black Americans refer to their members as 'brothers' and 'sisters'. Such sense of solidarity is absent in the calculative individualism of white professionals of capitalist society. Feminists promote traditional female values of nurturing which pose a challenge to a militarist worldview. Similarly American Indians' culture is tied to the land which poses a challenge to self-centred European culture that results in pollution and ecological destruction. In short, social movements of the oppressed tend to expose the faults of the dominant culture and show the way to evolve a new culture based on human values.

BHIKHU PAREKH'S VIEW

U.K.-based Indian political philosopher, Bhikhu Parekh, produced his in-depth study of multiculturalism in his noted work *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (2002). Parekh argues for pluralist perspective on cultural diversity. He examines its implications within the long tradition of liberal theory and also as its critic from outside. He observes that much of the traditional moral philosophy, including contemporary liberalism, stood for 'moral monism' that is the tendency to regard only one way of life or one set of values as worthwhile and to dismiss the rest as misguided or false. Parekh rejects this perspective and advances his pluralist perspective as the right approach to deal with present-day multicultural societies.

Liberalism

Liberalism refers to a principle of politics which regards 'liberty' or freedom' of individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. Its main tenets are: (*a*) Man is a rational being and the best judge of his self-interest; (*b*) Common interest represents the aggregate of self-interests of individuals; (*c*) The State is an artificial device meant to protect natural rights of individuals and to provide civil liberties to the citizens; (*d*) Relations between individuals should be generally modelled after those of a market society, that is these should be based on mutual consent derived from the consideration of mutual advantage; (*e*) However, the poor and deprived sections should be compensated through the welfare programmes of the State.

Accordingly, Parekh defines multiculturalism as follows:

Multiculturalism is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities. The norms governing their respective claims, including

> the principles of justice, cannot be derived from one culture alone but through an open and equal dialogue between them ..... By definition, a multicultural society consists of several cultures or cultural communities with their own distinct systems of meaning and significance and views on man and the world. It cannot be therefore adequately theorized from within the conceptual framework of any particular political doctrine which, being embedded in, and structurally biased towards, a particular cultural perspective, cannot do justice to others.

Parekh, therefore, *advances a theory of multiculturalism which promotes a dialogue between diverse cultural groups*. At the outset, Parekh attempts a dialogue between liberal and non-liberal traditions to arrive at a reasoned concept of multiculturalism. Then he insists on a dialogue between diverse cultures and the ethical norms, principles and institutional structures fostered by those norms. Parekh proceeds to give elaborate reasons as to why cultural differences should be respected and publicly affirmed, why the separation between church and the state cannot be used to justify the separation between religion and politics, and why the initial critique of Salman Rushdie (before a *fatwa* threatened this life) deserved more serious attention than it received.

Parekh rejects Will Kymlicka's definition of multiculturalism as it largely coincides with that of the nation. Kymlicka founds his theory of the minority rights on the concept of national units as the most complete cultural achievements; he rejects the assimilationist approach and asserts that minorities and majority should enjoy equal rights and a share of autonomy. For Kymlicka, national minority remains a discrete cultural and social unit, and it fares better than an individual who is compelled to subscribe to the culture of his 'host' nation. In short, Kymlicka evolves his concept of multiculturalism against the background of the status of immigrants to Canada. It cannot be accepted as a universal theory of multiculturalism. Parekh concludes that the hierarchy of minority rights envisaged by Kymlicka cannot be accepted as an adequate theory of multiculturalism.

Parekh does not accept even Charles Taylor's concept of multiculturalism. He criticizes Taylor's understanding or advocacy of the need for social recognition. In his view, Taylor seems to think that the dominant group can be rationally persuaded to change its attitude towards the minority groups by intellectual argument and moral appeal. This is to misunderstand the dynamics of the process of recognition. Parekh asserts that such recognition can only form part of the overall process of dismantling the structures of domination which were rooted in history and were reinforced by administrative action within the contemporary liberal states. Parekh arrives at an impressive conclusion that no cultural recognition will be successful without a 'just share of economic and political power'.

> Multicultural societies ... need to find ways of pluralizing the state without undermining its unity and the ability to act decisively in the collective interest.
>
> Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000)

Parekh's theory of multiculturalism rejects both 'naturalism' and 'culturalism'. Naturalism holds that all human beings have a relatively fixed nature and that

culture is only incidental. On the other hand, culturalism claims that human beings are socially and culturally constructed with only a minimal set of features in common. Since both the views are biased, Parekh argues for a dialogue and interplay between human commonalities and cultural differences. He concludes that this will allow genuinely balanced and thoughtful compromises on even the most controversial cultural issues in the new multicultural world of today. As Parekh observes:

> It is ... possible to arrive at a body of moral values which deserve the respect of all human beings. I have mentioned recognition of human worth and dignity, promotion of human well-being or fundamental human interests, and equality ... We should therefore identify those that are within the reach of all (societies), central to any form of good life, and for which we can give compelling reasons. We should consolidate global consensus around them and allow their inner momentum to generate a movement towards an increasingly higher level of consensus.

Thus Parekh's concept of multiculturalism comes very close to the prevailing concept of humanism and Tagore's concept of synthetic universalism.

Humanism

Humanism refers to a philosophical doctrine which holds that human dignity, human interests and human welfare are entitled to primary importance in all worldly affairs. It also believes in the immense potential of human understanding and treats it to be capable of finest achievements.

Synthetic Universalism

Synthetic universalism refers to the principle which seeks to join nationalism with internationalism and thereby promote humanism. This principle was enunciated by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Indian social philosopher and man-of-letters. According to him, when people evolve their political organization into different nations, rivalry between different nations tends to obstruct their mental development. Each nation resorts to regimentation of thought of its people with a view to consolidating its power and glory. In order to obviate this destructive tendency and to achieve constructive ends, each individual should strive to develop his or her talents by rising above narrow nationalism and entering into relationship with the whole humanity. For this he or she should get in touch with world literature, art, religions, philosophy, social symbols and etiquette and thereby feel at one with all human beings.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

In short, *the concept of multiculturalism brings out the drawbacks of the contemporary liberal democracies*. In the multicultural societies of today, the normal democratic process would set up majority rule which tends to obliterate the identity of diverse cultural and ethnic groups. To realize the ideal of true democracy, it is necessary to give due recognition and protection to the cultural

traits of diverse groups living together. This problem is not confined to the American or other Western societies. In a multicultural society like India, it is necessary to maintain the identity of various cultural groups for the realization of democracy and social justice. If the majority itself could absorb the cultural heritage of other groups into its own culture, it would set up a healthy tradition. Those who plead for the so-called 'purification' of Indian culture by insulating it from the influence of 'Other' cultures, run the risk of heading for moral degeneration of India.

> I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

In any case, too much insistence on 'difference' and rejection of the prevalent norms may result in isolation and deprivation in the case of certain minority groups. Those who reject the 'mainstream' culture and devote all energy to learning their own language and culture may ultimately realize that they are unfit to find employment, business opportunities or professional avenues in society. It must be remembered that 'mainstream' culture is not always the 'dominant' culture. It could be the product of interaction between different cultures, combined with the demands of new technology, business environment and professional techniques. It may even contain some 'foreign' influence as well as the vestige of colonial past. The continuance of English language, calender, dress code and styles of living, etc. are the case in point. One may despise and reject them only at his peril.

Again some groups in society could be the victims of cultural distortion. They will have to transform their own culture for their emancipation. For example, the inhuman practice of 'Untouchability' in India was the product of 'dominant culture'. However, it also vitiated the culture of its victims. That is why B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), their undisputed leader, exhorted them to abandon their age-old occupation and practices, migrate from villages to big cities, educate their children, adopt new professions, and finally mix with the mainstream.

Untouchability

Untouchability refers to a widespread practice of orthodox Hindu society under which certain outcaste Hindus were treated as untouchable by the caste Hindus; their touch was believed to pollute the caste Hindus; they were refused entry into temples, and were not allowed to use common wells, ponds, inns and other common services.

III
FORMATION OF COMPOSITE CULTURE

In the present-day world, the question of identity is not confined to cultural categories. We are born into a particular culture, and if we identify ourselves

strictly with that culture, our society will become static and the state will become an instrument of maintaining the status quo. Eventually we will become unfit to live in the modern world. It is important to note that with the advent of industrial revolution since mid-eighteenth century in Britain, industrial towns came up in many parts of the world where people coming from different cultures were required to live together in a market situation. Their common economic conditions relegated their cultural differences into the background. It was Marx (1818-83) who came to take stock of the situation in mid-nineteenth century. He realized that this situation had led to the division of society into two antagonistic classes: the industrial-merchant class, *i.e.* the capitalists or the *bourgeoisie* and the working class or the *proletariat*. Marx particularly stressed on the unity of the working class for fighting against their exploitation by the capitalist class. He argued that when millions of workers and their families are forced to live together near the centres of industrial production, they live under similar conditions and they have a common interest. Thus they become a 'class-in-itself'. But when they realize this situation and recognize the common source of their exploitation, they become 'class-for-itself'. This is the state of emergence of their 'class consciousness' which prepares them for the class struggle, *i.e.* the struggle against the capitalist class.

The present-day situation is much more complex in comparison to that prevailing in mid-nineteenth century Britain when Marx exhorted 'working men of the world to unite'. Today there is a widespread mixing of people from different cultures in countless situations of conflict and cooperation. Moreover, social conflict between different people is no longer confined to class conflict in the Marxian sense. Social movements in the present-day world seek to mobilize people on different issues of conflict cutting across their individual backgrounds. Even an individual may face the dilemma of choosing his or her true identity in some complex situations. For instance, socialist movement focuses on the conflict between the rich and the poor, and feminist movement focuses on the conflict between men and women. Now if there is a women from the poor class, should she align herself with men of the poor class, or with women of the rich class? Similarly in India, where caste consideration is so dominating, a landless labourer may be faced with the dilemma of aligning himself with the landlord of his own caste or with the landless labourers of different castes.

It is also true that insistence on narrow cultural identities may sometimes prove inimical to democratic spirit. For example, *in India when people vote on the basis of caste, language or regional affinity, many tainted politicians find their way to legislatures* so that law-breakers become law-makers. Sometimes minority groups insist on retaining certain outdated, irrational and unjust practices in the name of maintaining their identity and oppose any law intended to change those practices. So *the question of identity should be tackled with a note of caution*. The enlightened people of diverse cultural groups—whether in majority or minority—should come together to oppose unjust and irrational elements found in different cultures and encourage the evolution of a common culture incorporating the rich heritage of different languages, literature, styles of decency, art and craft, etc. That is precisely the requirement of a composite culture which encourages cooperation

and collaboration between various communities and paves the way for social integration and progress.

Composite Culture

Composite culture refers to a culture based on healthy interaction and mutual understanding between different cultural groups which come into contact with each other in a particular country. In this process, no culture is damaged or destroyed; there is no oppression, coercion or surrender from any side; all cultural groups continue to maintain their identity and also share the common cultural heritage of the country. The main culture tends to incorporate the chief characteristics of all the subsidiary cultures which make it acceptable to various cultural groups. Indian culture is usually regarded as a composite culture.

Components of a Composite Culture

- Learning each other's language and borrowing suitable words and expressions from those languages;
- Adopting each other's styles of art and craft;
- Learning about each other's literature, mythology, folklore, etc;
- Learning each other's styles of greetings and using them extensively;
- Respecting each other's places of worship, prophets and sages, etc.; and
- Celebrating each other's festivals together and giving the status of national festivals to the prominent festivals of each community.

Q 1. What do you understand by multiculturalism? How effective would it prove for dealing with diverse groups in a plural society?

2. "insistence on narrow cultural identities may sometimes prove inimical to democratic spirit." Elucidate and comment.

13

Principle of Anarchism

I
WHAT IS ANARCHISM ?

> The greater the state, the more wrong and cruel its patriotism, and the greater is the sum of suffering upon which its power is founded.
>
> Leo Tolstoy

Anarchism stands for a mode of thought which holds that society can and should be organized without the coercive authority of the state. Although some indications of this mode of thought could be traced to ancient times, William Godwin (1756-1836), British political theorist, was the first thinker who argued unequivocally for a stateless society. His *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) is regarded to be the first systematic defence of anarchism. However, it was P.J. Proudhon (1809-65), French philosopher, who was the first to call himself an anarchist. As an ideology anarchism had its greatest influence in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when several revolutionary movements in Western countries favoured this mode of thought.

Anarchist thinkers have one common aim—abolition of the state. But they widely differ as to how the state should be abolished, and what type of organization should be evolved to replace it. So they by no means form a homogeneous group. They include a wide variety of thinkers ranging from the champions of extreme form of socialism to the advocates of extreme form of individualism. All anarchists agree on the need to dispense with compulsory forms of authority, culminating in authority of the state. However, most anarchists accept the rational form of authority, particularly the authority of experts. *e.g.* scientists and doctors in their respective fields, as also the moral authority of collective decisions taken in a genuinely democratic manner. They are mostly averse to hierarchical forms of authority, *e.g.* churches, armies, bosses of capitalist enterprises, and impersonal bureaucracies.

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Socialism

Socialism refers to a principle of politics which favours social ownership and control of the means of social production so that all able-bodied persons could be suitably employed in productive work, and all means of social production could be deployed for the fulfilment of social needs.

Individualism

Individualism refers to the principle which regards individual as a rational agent and capable of understanding his good. It requires that individual's dignity, autonomy and judgement should be given full recognition while making public policy and decisions. It supports a legal, social and political system based on voluntary transactions between different individuals.

Of the several schools of anarchist thought, the following are particularly important: philosophical anarchism, socialist anarchism, revolutionary anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, pacific anarchism, and libertarian anarchism.

II
PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM

Philosophical anarchism rejects the idea of legitimate authority in the sense that no individual, whether state official or not, has the right to command the obedience of another. Individual autonomy, as conceived morally, requires individuals to act according to their own judgements. Because of its focus on individual, this school of thought is also called '*individualist anarchism*'. It was originally founded by Godwin himself in his essay *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793). Then Max Stirner (1806-56), German philosopher, in *The Ego and His Own* (1845), argued that every individual is the unique one who truly 'owns himself'; he recognizes no duties to others, and does what is right for himself, within the limit of his might. In contemporary thought, Godwin's line of argument was endorsed by R.P. Wolff (*In Defense of Anarchism*; 1970).

Accordingly, philosophical anarchism has little scope to encourage cooperation among individuals or to evolve their formal organization. Its upholders are generally suspicious of authority, yet they recognize the rational authority of experts within their fields of competence and the moral authority of basic social norms, such as 'contracts should be kept'. If politics is defined as the art of persuading others when they do not agree, then philosophical anarchists may also recognize even political authority, but not the coercive authority of the state. So if members of a commune or workers' cooperative actually participate in decision-making, their decisions may be deemed morally binding.

III
SOCIALIST ANARCHISM

Socialist anarchism insists on freedom of individual, defined as the capacity to satisfy his needs. It regards social and economic equality as a necessary condition to secure maximum freedom of all. In its view, social and economic equality is incompatible with capitalist private property and the state. Socialist anarchism is, therefore, opposed to the institutions of private property and the state. P.J. Proudhon (1809-65), French philosopher, is regarded the chief exponent of socialist anarchism. He postulated 'mutual aid' as the appropriate method of achieving its goal. It is, therefore, also called '*mutualism*'.

Proudhon argued that liberty or freedom is the mother, not the daughter, of order. All political parties are a variety of despotism. Power of the state and power of the capital are coterminous. So the proletariat cannot emancipate itself by acquiring and using state power. On this ground, Proudhon criticized Marx's idea of establishing 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as a way to human emancipation. Instead of violent method of overthrowing capitalism, Proudhon recommended the peaceful method of direct action and the practice of mutualism for evolving a new social order. He proposed that society should be organized as a network of autonomous local communities and producers' associations, linked by 'the federal principle'. Each person might possess his means of production (tools and equipment, land, etc.) either singly or collectively, but should only be rewarded for his labour. This system will eliminate the elements of profit and rent, and ensure a high degree of equality.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

According to Marxism, dictatorship of the proletariat refers to a form of organization of the State that comes into existence when organized working class overthrows capitalism and assumes full control of political power. It is characterized by the socialization of the major means of production. *de novo* planning of material production so as to serve social needs, provide for an effective right to work, education, health and housing for the masses, and further development of science and technology so as to multiply material production to achieve greater social satisfaction.

Under this system, exchange of goods and services between different voluntary associations will be based on the principle that each party will seek only an equivalent for what it offered to the other. This will be supplemented by the establishment of a mutual credit bank which would lend money to producers at a minimal rate of interest, covering only its cost of administration. Proudhon firmly believed that this system of mutual aid would promote social solidarity.

Proudhon's experiments on these lines proved to be a failure in actual practice. But his French disciples played an influential role in the early years of the First International (founded by the London Working Men's Association in 1864).

Philosophy of socialist anarchism was further developed by Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), Russian thinker. In *Mutual Aid—a Factor of Evolution* (1890- 96), Kropotkin argued that the principle of 'the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest' as enunciated by Charles Darwin (1809-82) in the field of biological evolution, does not apply to the sphere of social evolution. On the contrary, sociability is the hallmark of human beings. It is, under all circumstances, the greatest advantage in the struggle for life, and therefore the natural condition of all evolutionary beings. *If human beings are not corrupted by the state and law, they would develop bonds of instinctive solidarity which would make government unnecessary*. Kropotkin favoured a system of 'communism' where everything belongs to everyone, and distribution is made according to needs. Kropotkin's version of socialist anarchism is called '*communist anarchism*'.

IV
REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

Revolutionary anarchism is still another version of socialist anarchism. Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76), Russian revolutionary, is regarded the chief exponent of revolutionary anarchism. It is called revolutionary because of its method of achieving the goal of anarchism. Since it believes in collectivization of the means of social production, it is also called '*collectivism*'. Bakunin stood for the strategy of encouraging popular insurrections. It was envisaged that during the course of these insurrections, capitalist and landed property would be expropriated and collectivized, and the state would be abolished. It would be replaced by autonomous, but federally linked, communes.

Commune

Commune refers to an organized group of people or families who work together, live together, and share the fruits of their common labour for individual as well as common use.

The term 'communism' is itself derived from the idea of setting up a network of 'communes'.

Bakunin projected the vision of a socialist society which would be organized from below upwards, not from above downwards. To foster the spirit of revolt among the oppressed, revolutionary anarchists adopted the tactic of 'propaganda by the deed'. Their programme was to start with local insurrections, and then resort to the acts of assassination and terrorism. They sought to establish a collectivist system in which each group of organized workers would be managing their own means of production. Distribution of the proceeds was to be made according to collective decision. It was generally assumed that rewards would be proportional to labour, at least for the foreseeable future. Revolutionary anarchists opposed the authoritarian element that was a hallmark of Marx's communism.

V
ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

Anarcho-syndicalism or *syndicalist anarchism* is another version of revolutionary anarchism. Georges-Eugene Sorel (1847-1922), French philosopher, was its chief exponent. It was based on the idea to turn trade unions into revolutionary instruments of class struggle. Instead of 'communes' (as envisaged by the communist anarchism), anarcho-syndicalism sought to make trade unions the basic units of a new society. In his important work *Reflections on Violence* (1908), Sorel argued that law and institutions of every enduring society contain a sort of structural violence. Capitalist system is itself an epitome of violence. *Unjust violence should be fought with just type of violence.*

Sorel commended the method of 'General Strike' as the fit instrument for the workers to fight against capitalism. He recommended the use of 'myth' to mobilize masses into action. The power of the 'general strike' could be exaggerated to elevate it to the level of a 'myth' which should be used to mobilize workers for mass action. Since Sorel relied on organized groups to overthrow capitalist state, and provide for its alternative, he is not regarded a full-fledged anarchist.

Myth

Myth implies an idea or a story that refers to some wonderful or miraculous qualities of something. It Is believed to be true by its upholders although there is no evidence to prove it. The concept of myth as a political tool was developed by Georges-Eugene Sorel (1847-1922), French philosopher. Sorel suggested the use of myth to stimulate mass action, particularly the resort to 'General Strike' by workers to make them realize their unique collective strength. Sorel argued that validity of the myth was unimportant as long as it resulted in the desired action.

VI
PACIFIC ANARCHISM

In contrast to revolutionary anarchism, pacific anarchism stands for abolition of the state in a peaceful manner. It advocates anarchism on moral grounds. Its chief exponent, Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian novelist, was inspired by 'the law of love', expressed in the Sermon on the Mount (delivered by Christ himself). This made him denounce the state as 'organized violence' and to call on people to disobey its immoral commands. Tolstoy argued that the state tried to fight one evil with another evil, *i.e.* with the help of police and military force. Private property enables the few to lead a luxurious life by exploiting others' labour. Both of them should be abolished for the regeneration of humanity. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian philosopher, was inspired by these ideas in developing his

philosophy of non-violence.

In any case, Tolstoy did not advance any concrete programme for the abolition of the state.

VII
LIBERTARIAN ANARCHISM

Libertarian anarchism represents the contemporary version of 'individualist anarchism'. Its beginnings may be traced to Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), English philosopher. Spencer's concept of 'blessedness of anarchy' envisages the development of 'market society' to a stage where the state is dissolved and society becomes self-regulated. Its contemporary exponents include F.A. Hayek (1899-1992), Austrian economist, and Robert Nozick (1938-2002), American philosopher. They are the champions of libertarianism. Libertarianism stands for the revival of *laissez-faire* individualism which believes in minimum interference of the state in the economic activities of people.

Libertarianism

Libertarianism refers to a contemporary principle of politics which seeks to remove all impediments in the way of individual's liberty as the basic principle of public policy. It rejects welfare state and treats free market society as an essential condition of liberty. It stands for minimum intervention of the State in mutual dealings of individuals.

F.A. Hayek, in *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, Vol. 1: *Rules and Order* (1973), observed that social order exists independently of the state—an order spontaneously generated, a product of human sociability. This natural order does not need supplementing by an order imposed from above. Then Nozick, in his *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), argued that the state has no legitimate powers beyond the functions of protection, justice and defence; it is not authorized to engage in redistributive transfers among its citizens who were originally its clients. In Nozick's view, legal rights are the product of voluntary exchanges. An ideal state would be one which completely stays away from regulating voluntary exchange between individuals. It would approximate to anarchy. For Nozick, anarchy refers to the status of a self-regulated society where government is not required to exercise its regulatory function.

In short, libertarians stand for restricting the role of the state to minimum possible level. They do not recommend to abolish the state altogether. The contemporary exponents of 'rational choice' theory also advance similar arguments. M. Taylor, in his essay *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* (1982), argued that social order is a 'public good'. It cannot be divided and nobody can be excluded from its benefits, yet people under the conditions of 'anarchy' will cooperate voluntarily to create it. For libertarian anarchists, the state is not merely a necessary evil; it is a positive evil. They advocate the idea of 'natural society', a self-regulated, pluralistic society in which power and authority are radically decentralized.

Broad Streams of Anarchism

The *Stream*	*Chief Exponents*
Philosophical Anarchism	William Godwin (1756-1836), British political philosopher, Max Stirner (1806-56), German philosopher
Socialist Anarchism	P.J. Proudhan (1809-65), French philosopher, Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), Russian philosopher
Communist Anarchism/ Revolutionary Anarchism	Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76), Russian revolutionary and philosopher
Pacific Anarchism	Leo Tolstov (1828-1910), Russian writer and philosopher
Anarcho-Syndicalism	Georges-Eugene Sorel (1847-1922), French philosopher
Libertarian Anarchism	Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), English philosopher, F.A. Hayek (1899-1992), Austrian economist Robert Nozick (1938-2002), American Philosopher

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Anarchism is based on a fascinating idea. However, it takes a too optimistic view of human nature. If human nature were so benign as envisaged by the anarchists, and society could become self-regulated without interference of the state, the ills afflicting human society under the state would not have arisen at all which the anarchists want to remedy.

Moreover, in the contemporary world which is severely afflicted by the problems of worldwide terrorism, crime and environmental pollution, the need of regulation has become all the more evident and pressing. It is now felt that authority of the state is inadequate to deal with these gigantic problems. *There is an urgent need to strengthen the machinery of global governance in order to regulate the present-day world which would supplement authority of the state.* Anarchist vision is terribly inadequate to deal with this situation.

However, various schools of anarchism draw our attention to the tyranny of economic and political power which makes the life of people so miserable! Its significance lies in devising suitable means to curb that power. That will restore justice in society and pave the way for human emancipation.

Q. Define anarchism. Give a brief account of the broad streams of anarchist school of thought.

14

Principles of Socialism

I
WHAT IS SOCIALISM ?

The term 'socialism' is variously understood and defined by various thinkers and schools of thought. C.E.M. Joad, in his *Introduction to Modern Political Theory* (1924), significantly observed:

> Socialism proves to be a different creed in the hands of its exponents, varying with the temperaments of its advocates and the nature of abuses which have prompted their advocacy...*Socialism,* in short, *is like a hat that has lost its shape because everybody wears it.*

A large number of works on socialism have evaded the problem of defining it. However, a working definition of socialism is necessary in order to understand its various applications. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines socialism as 'a theory or policy that aims at or advocates the ownership or control of the means of production—capital, land, property, etc.—by the community as a whole and their administration in the interests of all'. This definition, though not very comprehensive, indicates the chief method and goal of socialism. A more elaborate definition of socialism is found in Joseph A. Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942) where it is defined as :

> that organization of society in which the means of production are controlled, and the decisions on how and what to produce and on who is to get what, are made by public authority instead of by privately-owned and privately-managed firms.

Many other definitions and descriptions of socialism more or less embrace these and similar ideas.

In short, *socialism stands for an economic system under which major instruments of social production* (that is the instruments by which production is carried out for consumption by the larger society) *are placed under the ownership and control of public authority in order to ensure that they are properly utilized to*

secure the public interest. It is based on the view that liberty and equality granted to citizens in the political sphere will remain an empty form unless they are accompanied by the reorganization of the economic life of society so as to convert them into substantive rights for citizens.

Public Interest

Public interest refers to the goal which is regarded by decision-makers of the community as conducive to serving interest of the whole community, transcending immediate interests of different individuals and groups. It does not recognize diverse interests of a class, party or faction as worth pursuing, but seeks to identify an area where ultimate interests of all members of the community would coincide. For example, the measures concerning defence, maintenance of law and order, public health, improvement of the levels of nutrition, expansion of education and environmental protection, control of public expenditure, etc. are supposed to serve the public interest.

How can socialism be established in society? It is interesting to note that the varieties of socialism differ from each other because of their different answers to this important question. The distinction between them will help us understand the essence of socialism.

UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

These terms were introduced by Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) to distinguish their own concept of socialism from its earlier version. They claimed that they had founded 'scientific socialism' whereas the earlier socialist thought was simply 'utopian'.

Utopian

Utopian refers to something resembling a utopia—an imaginary island governed by a perfect social and political system, but incapable of realization in practice. *Utopia* was the title of Sir Thomas More's famous book published in 1516. Utopians were the thinkers who, being dissatisfied with the existing state of society, sought to ventilate their dissatisfaction by creating imaginary pictures of an ideal society where property was held in common and injustice was unknown.

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, numerous philosophers and humanitarians proceeded to draw pictures of an ideal commonwealth which needed only to be perceived to become acceptable to society. They are called 'utopian' because they created extremely fascinating pictures of an ideal social and political order, far removed from the harsh realities of life. They seldom realized that society was not at all prepared for a leap from private to common ownership of industry, that the privileged classes would never part with their privileged position without adequate pressure from the underprivileged classes; that the future social order would be determined by the play of historical forces, and not by any schemes offered by visionary philosophers.

The two outstanding pioneers of utopian socialism were Robert Owen (1771-

1858) and Charles Fourier (1772-1837). Owen was a Scottish cotton manufacturer who believed that people could be taught the principles of cooperation instead of competition. He held that human nature could be transformed if only the environment were reconstructed. Inspired by his ideas, model communities sprang up in Scotland, England and America. Fourier was a French philosopher who had a much more elaborate plan for a model community where waste, inefficiency, boredom and inequality would be thoroughly eliminated. He hoped that the world could be persuaded to mend its ways if only his ideas were propagated. P.J. Proudhon (1809-65), another French thinker, also hoped to set up a nationwide system of decentralized workers' cooperatives, which would bargain with one another for the mutual exchange of goods and services. All these thinkers agreed on one main point: that individual enterprise and market competition were inimical to human welfare and that a cooperative form of social organization could provide the remedy to the existing ills of society.

The chief contribution of the utopian socialists was that they drew society's attention to the inadequacies of the industrial system and painted a picture of a society free from inequality, exploitation and injustice.

Marx and Engels sought to replace the existing vision of socialism by what they called 'scientific socialism'. They were Germans who spent most of their active life in England—the homeland of the Industrial Revolution. Before going to England, Marx had spent some time in Paris where he had become acquainted with many leaders of French socialism. He liked their objectives but despised their methods which were thoroughly ineffective. Engels agreed with him on this point. As a result, *Marx and Engels dismissed all previous socialist thinking as utopian, especially because it was not based on a scientific understanding of the mechanism of social injustice in capitalist society*. The earlier thinkers had simply relied on the benevolence of some enlightened capitalists which was nothing more than a dream. On the contrary, Marx and Engles went deep into the causes of social injustice which had existed throughout historical evolution, and sought to evolve a practical solution to end that injustice through a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. They were convinced that violent revolution was indispensable for the victory of socialism because capitalists would never be prepared to give up their privileged position without a fierce struggle. Since the working class was the main sufferer from social injustice, the struggle against capitalism was to be led by the working class itself.

Capitalism

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production, where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as market demand.

Marx was thoroughly trained in the Hegelian school of philosophy. One of the outstanding achievements of this school was to create a philosophy of history.

Marx followed Hegel's 'dialectical method' but he created his own philosophy of history. The dialectical method originally signified a process whereby new ideas are generated through an intellectual debate, that is by the clash of conflicting ideas. Thus, in Hegel's (1770-1831) system of thought, known as 'idealism', the 'idea' represented the motive force behind history. Social and political institutions were but manifestations of the prevalent 'idea'. Marx substituted 'idea' with 'matter', especially the mode of material production in society, as the driving force of historical development, and evolved his 'materialist interpretation of history'.

According to this interpretation, the constant search of society for a better system of production gives rise to changes in the mode of production and consequent changes in social relationships, ideas and institutions. This process is responsible for the *progress* from one historical stage to another—from primitive communism to slave-owning society; then to feudal system, capitalist system, socialist system, and finally to communism. Accordingly, socialist system comes into existence by overthrowing capitalist system, because every epoch in human history is the product of a revolution— 'revolution is the indispensable midwife of social change'. Capitalist system marks the progress from feudal system because it is characterized by industrial mode of production which is superior to agricultural mode of production. But it fails to meet social needs adequately because it is based on the division of society into haves and have-nots, capitalists and workers, bourgeoisie and proletariat, and the accompanying exploitation of the proletariat and the wrong choice of production policies. This must, therefore, give way to socialism. Thus, socialism is an inevitable outcome of historical forces. But if the working class makes conscious and organized effort in this direction, the process of change can be accelerated. Thus *Marx exhorted the proletariat to realize its historical role and work incessantly for bringing about socialism speedily.* Socialism, by socializing the means of production, that is by placing these means under common ownership and control of society, puts an end to the exploitation of man by man and thus paves the way for the emergence of a classless and stateless society.

In this way, the Marxian approach to socialism was based on a scientific understanding of the process of history and the role of the working class in bringing about socialism. It is, therefore, described as 'scientific socialism'.

Scientific Socialism

Scientific socialism refers to the theory of socialism based on the scientific laws derived from historical analysis. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) are the chief exponents of this theory. They held that the various stages of historical development are the manifestations of contradictions in material conditions which necessarily push human society toward the goal of socialism. *Whereas utopian socialism regards socialism as a moral choice, scientific socialism considers it a historical necessity.*

EVOLUTIONARY AND REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

When the goal of socialism is sought to be achieved through evolutionary

process or by degrees—not by the wholesale transformation of society in a single stroke—it is described as 'evolutionary socialism'. *Evolutionary socialism* may be distinguished from *revolutionary socialism*, which seeks to introduce socialism in its totality so as to replace capitalist system by socialist system in a single stroke. In other words, revolutionary socialism seeks to transform the social system thoroughly instead of accepting small concessions for the underprivileged sections. In fact, evolutionary socialism admits an attitude of 'compromise'—compromise between capitalism and socialism, so that the capitalist system is allowed to continue with some changes here and there in the socialist direction. It therefore belongs to the liberal tradition. On the other hand, revolutionary socialism makes a direct attack on the prevailing contradictions of the social order. It therefore belongs to the Marxist tradition. *While evolutionary socialism may also be described as 'liberal socialism', revolutionary socialism may be called 'Marxian socialism'.*

Evolution

Evolution implies a pattern of social change where any perceptible change is seen as the outcome of cumulative effect of many short, imperceptible changes. It transforms the old, simple forms of social life into new, complex forms. This model has been borrowed from biological sciences. In other words, it uses the analogy of evolution of plants and animals for explaining the pattern of social change.

Revolution

Revolution implies a sudden or very fast change in the social system which may affect all aspects of social life, e.g. power structure, economy, ways of living, norms and beliefs, and so on. It may be the outcome of mass uprising, mass mobilization, new discovery and inventions, etc. Factors behind revolution may have taken time to reach the point of culmination, but their impact is felt abruptly at a given point of time.

Evolutionary socialism relies on the democratic method, parliamentary reform and even economic planning on the plea that the interests of the underprivileged sections, especially the working classes, might be represented and taken care of by their representatives and leadership. It is, therefore, coterminous with 'democratic socialism'. Revolutionary socialism, on the other hand, insists on organizing the working classes for fighting against capitalism so as to overthrow the capitalist order and establish complete socialization of the instruments of production and distribution, by a revolution.

It is important to note that evolutionary socialism aims at securing the rights of the working classes, especially their economic rights, as a part of the supposed *common interest* of the community. In other words, it seeks to accommodate or *reconcile* the interests of the working classes with those of other classes. Thus, it subscribes to the theory of *harmony* or *equilibrium* as the governing principle of social relationships, corresponding to the position taken by modern liberalism.

On the other hand, revolutionary socialism repudiates the theory of equilibrium or reconciliation between the diverse interests prevailing in the society. It seeks to reverse the position of the *dominant* and *dependent classes* found in the capitalist society, and ultimately to destroy the conditions of domination itself so as to secure a *classless society*.

The early exponents of evolutionary socialism were largely associated with Fabian socialism.

II
FABIAN SOCIALISM

Some thirty-five years after the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) was issued, Fabian socialism made its appearance in England. This was the first systematic doctrine of 'evolutionary socialism', as a substitute for Marxian 'revolutionary socialism'. Fabian socialists sought to modify the Marxian concepts in several ways :

(*a*) They based their economics on the Ricardian law of rent rather than on the labour theory of value;

(*b*) They did not rely exclusively on the working class for bringing about social change but set before themselves the task of 'permeating' the middle class with the socialist message; and finally,

(*c*) They sought to introduce socialism, not in a single stroke, but by degrees through state and cooperative ownership of industry, increasing power of labour in legislative and executive offices, growth of trade unions and educational movements and development of social consciousness—through gradual democratization of society in the political, economic and intellectual fields.

Ricardian Law of Rent

Ricardian law of rent refers to the law enunciated by David Ricardo (1772-1823), English economist. It held that with the growth of industrialization, demand for foodgrains rises and rent on land goes up. So landlords immensely benefit from the growth of capitalism.

Labour Theory of Value

Labour theory of value, as enunciated by David Ricardo (1772-1823), English economist, holds that the true value of material goods is determined by the amount of labour which was required to produce those goods.

Fabian socialism or Fabianism was first developed in England by the Fabian Society (founded in 1884) from which it derived its name. The term 'Fabian' was adopted after the name of a great Roman General, Quintus Fabius (275-203 BC), whose tactics in the fight against Hannibal served as a guide for the Society. Thus

its motto read: 'For the right moment you must wait, as Fabius did, most patiently, when warring against Hannibal, though many censured his delays; but when the time comes you must strike hard, as Fabius did, or your waiting will be in vain and fruitless.'

It will be recalled that the Marxian socialism, developed in the late forties of the nineteenth century, had envisaged revolution as an essential medium of change from capitalism to socialism. However, Fabian socialism regarded the transition from capitalism to socialism as a gradual process; it looked forward to the socialization of industry by the peaceful use of economic and political agencies already in hand.

Marxian socialism had relied on the working class to bring about the transition from capitalism to socialism. Fabian socialism sought to make use of the services of the middle class for developing the technique of bringing about a new social order. It sought to arouse the social conscience of the community in favour of the socialist ideal, and considered it to be a significant achievement.

Fabianism, in fact, arose in the wake of the growth of democracy in Great Britain, especially during the years 1865 to 1885. During this period, the working classes had not only obtained the franchise (right-to-vote) and the legalization of trade unions, but their influence on legislation and the wage-contract was visibly on the increase. In such a state there was no need of a revolution to create a new political mechanism, for it was already in existence and needed only to be used for the social transformation.

The Fabian socialists addressed themselves to the task of making the democratic state an instrument of systematic social reform. Sydney Webb (1859-1947), the leading Fabian socialist, maintained that the mission of the socialists was to acquire knowledge by means of specialized research into the various manifestations of economic and social life, to acquaint themselves with the machinery of legislation and administration, and to put their knowledge and experience at the disposal of all political agencies.

With the new approach, Fabianism was able to attract some very brilliant persons of England who became its exponents. Among them George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), Sydney Webb (1859-1947), Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), Sidney Olivier (1859-1943), Graham Wallas (1858-1932), and G.D.H. Cole (1889-1959) are the most illustrious figures.

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF FABIAN SOCIALISM

The exponents of Fabian socialism, which included many eminent writers, produced a sizeable literature wherein they spelled out their aims and objects. Among these, the following aims are very important:

Emancipation of Land and Industrial Capital

In pursuance of its socialist mission, the Fabian Society sought reorganization of society through the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership, and vesting them in the community for the general benefit, so that

the natural and acquired assets of the community could be equitably shared by all.

This, in effect, meant working for the end of private property in land and the abolition of rent and other benefits accruing from private ownership of land. It is important to note that the monopoly of the means of industrial production, industrial inventions and transformation of surplus income had, in the past, mainly enriched the proprietary class while the worker had remained dependent upon that class for the means to earn a living. Fabianism sought to emancipate the worker through the transfer of the management of industrial capital to the community as a whole.

Equality of Opportunity

The Fabian Society was convinced that the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership would create conditions under which rent and interest would be added to the reward of labour. The idle class, living on the labour of others, would necessarily disappear and political equality of opportunity would be maintained by the spontaneous action of economic forces. This would substantially curtail the existing level of interference with personal liberty of the individual.

Dissemination of Socialist Ideas

The Fabian Society aimed at spreading socialist ideas, especially regarding the relation between individual and society in its economic, ethical and political aspects, including the establishment of equal citizenship for men and women. For this purpose, the Fabian socialists sought to use the democratic method of a slow and gradual turning of the popular mind to the new principles of social reorganization. Sydney Webb, writing on the historical basis of socialism in the *Fabian Essays* (1889), edited by George Bernard Shaw, observed that important organic changes can only be:

(1) *Democratic,* and thus acceptable to a majority of the people;

(2) *Gradual,* and thus causing no dislocation, however rapid may be the rate of progress;

(3) *Not* regarded as *immoral* by the mass of the people, and thus not subjectively demoralizing them; and

(4) In England, at any rate, constitutional and peaceful.

Webb came out with a new interpretation of democracy in conformity with the socialist point of view. He *asserted that democracy consisted in the control by the people themselves,* not only of their own political organization, but, through that also, *of the main instruments of wealth production; the gradual substitution of organized cooperation for the anarchy of competitive struggle and the consequent recovery of the enormous share which the possessors of the instruments of industry are able to take from the produce.*

Thus, the Fabian socialists were convinced that the spread of socialist ideas would automatically *transform democracy into socialism.*

Universal Education

Sydney Olivier, writing on the moral basis of socialism in the *Fabian Essays*, insisted on the provision of universal education as an essential means of emancipation of the working class. He argued that the educational system was an essential instrument of fostering social morality. The idea of the school implied leisure to learn. This meant 'the release of children from all non-educational labour until mind and physique have had a fair start and training'. Education of adults needed a still wider arrangement:

> The school of the adult are the journal and the library, social intercourse, fresh air, clean and beautiful cities, the joy of the fields, the museum, the art gallery, the lecture-hall, the drama and the opera; and only when these schools are free and accessible to all will the reproach of proletarian coarseness be done away with.

III
MINOR VARIETIES OF SOCIALISM

Apart from evolutionary socialism, some minor varieties of socialism also mark a departure from the Marxian view of socialism. Of these German Social Democracy, Revisionism, Syndicalism, and Guild Socialism are particularly important.

GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

German social democracy, as developed by Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-64), was another important version of evolutionary socialism. Lassalle accepted the Marxian doctrine of economic interpretation of history so far as it implied that the rise of the working class and the consequent decline of capitalism was inevitable in the future society. However, Lassalle evolved a different view regarding the nature and role of the state.

Instead of violent overthrow of the capitalist state, Lassale suggested that the working class should organize itself into a political party with a view to securing universal, equal and direct suffrage so as to make its power legally effective. Thus Lassalle envisaged a constitutional and peaceful transition from the capitalist state to a workers' state. In this way, Lassalle sought to redefine the immediate goal of the workers' movement as securing a majority in the democratic legislative organs of the state.

REVISIONISM

Another important school of evolutionary socialism that emerged in Germany itself was the revisionist school led by Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932). It also sought to revise some of the basic tenets of Marxian theory, particularly on the following lines:

(*a*) The class struggle had become less intense because the conditions of the working class had improved rather than deteriorated;

(*b*) The middle class had, in fact, expanded rather than shrunk; and

(*c*) Large areas of industry had remained in small-scale production rather than concentrated in large-scale industries.

Bernstein, therefore, insisted that socialism should be treated more as a *movement* than as an *ultimate goal*. Karl Kautsky (1854-1939) continued to defend Marxian theories which remained the official doctrine of communist parties of Europe, but revisionist tactics became part of the socialist struggle.

Bernstein rejected Marx's materialist interpretation of history which implies the inevitability of class conflict as the road to socialism. Instead of class struggle and class rule, Bernstein chose democracy, a genuine partnership of all adult citizens in a limited government as their joint enterprise. Liberal democracy was, to his mind, the very substance of socialism.

Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy refers to the system of governance based on the principles of liberalism and democracy. Liberalism seeks to evolve such rules and procedures that would secure liberty of individual while democracy implies the formation of government with the consent of the ordinary people. Accordingly, liberal democracy is largely identified by the following characteristics: (*a*) Representative government based on majority rule with due recognition of minority rights: (*b*) More than one political parties freely competing for political power; (*c*) Periodic elections based on universal adult franchise; (*d*) Political offices not confined to any privileged class; (*e*) Accountability of government to the electorate; (*f*) Protection of civil liberties of citizens (such as freedom of thought and expression, movement, association and assembly, etc. Including freedom to criticize the government); and (*g*) Independence of judiciary from executive and legislative control.

SYNDICALISM

The socialist movement developed in France and Latin countries in the form of Syndicalism. French philosopher Georges-Eugene Sorel (1847-1922) was the chief exponent of Syndicalism. In fact, Syndicalism originated as a trend in the French labour movement which considers labour unions and their federations as cells of the future socialist order. It insists on the complete independence of labour unions from political parties. In short :

(*a*) Syndicalism accepted the class-struggle theory of Marx;

(*b*) It preached abolition of the political state;

(*c*) It urged industrial action as the only effective means of bringing about a revolutionary change in society and treated the 'General Strike' as a means of securing workers' control over industry; and

(*d*) It visualized a social order in which all power would be given to the producer; trade and industrial unions would serve as the economic framework of society.

Syndicalism achieved great ideological success in France in the period between 1899 and 1937. Initially, the movement insisted on the exclusive right of workers to control industry. But after the First World War (1914-18), it expanded its scope and conceded the equal right of consumers in this sphere of control. Syndicalism stood for 'socialization without state'. Its opposition to the state rested on two major arguments :

(*a*) The state should have no right in the control of industry; and

(*b*) Independent economic organizations should be used to restrict and counterbalance the power of the state.

GUILD SOCIALISM

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, there was another socialist movement in England, known as Guild Socialism. British philosopher G.D.H. Cole (1889-1959) is regarded the chief theorist of Guild Socialism, although Cole had a long association with Fabian Socialism also. In fact, Guild Socialism originated as a trend in the British labour movement which enjoyed great ideological success in the period from 1916 to 1926. It tried to combine the good points of socialism with those of the ancient guild system. In short:

(*a*) It upheld the Marxian emphasis on class struggle;

(*b*) It stood for the abolition of the wage system and demanded representation of the workers in industrial control;

(*c*) It sought to modify Syndicalism by introducing the importance of consumer side by side with the worker; and

(*d*) It sought to abolish the old state which was an instrument of exploitation. However, it insisted that a new organization must be evolved to take charge of the many civic activities necessary to the life of the community.

Guild System

Guild system refers to a system of organization of work which prevailed in the preindustrial communities of late medieval Europe. A guild, in this sense, refers to an association of craftsmen and artisans that was formed to provide for mutual support, to pass on knowledge to new entrants in the trade, to control craft standards, and to govern new entries into the trade. The guilds enjoyed special prestige and power; membership of a guild was regarded to be a source of privilege.

Guild Socialism was strongly opposed not only to communism but also to all forms of collectivistic socialism. It was inspired by that branch of French Syndicalism which sought to restrict and counterbalance the power of the political state by independent economic organizations of workers and consumers. However, British Guild Socialism drifted away from French Syndicalism because of its affinity with the British liberal tradition as manifested in the pluralistic view of society.

Pluralistic View of Society

Pluralistic view of society is based on the belief in giving due importance to various interests in society. It tends to encourage the emergence of several centres of power and authority, rather than accepting the state as the sole controller of people's actions.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Evolutionary socialism, in some form or the other, is practised in a large number of countries today. In some countries, especially in the Scandinavian countries, it has brought widespread security and prosperity. In others, such as India, it has secured a marginal improvement in the general standards of living without making an effective dent in the vast socio-economic disparties. In has, therefore, been criticized on various grounds.

No Coherent Doctrine

Evolutionary socialism is criticized because is has no coherent doctrine. There are so many varieties of evolutionary socialism—Fabian socialism, revisionism, syndicalism, guild socialism, parliamentary or democratic socialism, etc.—that it is difficult to identify its essential contents. Different forms of evolutionary socialism accept or reject some or the other tenets of Marxian socialism without evolving suitable alternative strategies. It is, therefore, devoid of any general, unified view, consistent philosophy or programme. Different schools of evolutionary socialism seek to substitute 'class cooperation' for 'class conflict', 'democracy' for 'dictatorship of the proletariat', and an 'evolutionary method' for the 'revolutionary method'. But they fail to demonstrate how these substitutes can function effectively to attain the socialist goals.

Not Based in the Working Class

Some forms of evolutionary socialism, such as syndicalism and guild socialism, are, of course, based in the working class. But other forms are not so based. For instance, Fabian socialism was exclusively based in the intellectuals of the middle class, with hardly any links with the working class. In effect, it was reduced to an intellectual luxury. It aimed at permeating all classes, but failed to arouse the working class which is the main sufferer under the capitalist system, and which is bound to be the chief beneficiary of the socialist transformation. In fact, Fabian socialism insisted on redistribution of national wealth for the social good, that is for the benefit of all sections of society rather than for a particular section like the workers. In essence, this was nearer the principle of liberalism rather than that of socialism which seeks to tilt the balance in favour of the weaker, exploited, underprivileged and oppressed sections.

Legitimization of the Bourgeois State

Evolutionary socialism seeks to accommodate socialist goals in the operation of the capitalist system. Since capitalism has accepted 'liberal democracy' as its

political framework, characterized by universal franchise, periodic elections and free competition for power, it is felt that the people's urge for economic equality cannot be evaded for long by granting them formal equality in the political sphere. It is alleged that the adoption of socialist goals reassures the people, and serves as a 'safety valve' for the capitalist system. In other words, evolutionary socialism is the device to maintain market society system with certain modifications.

However, it may be conceded that no society can function efficiently without adequate incentives. Even 'pure' socialist systems felt the need of introducing a modicum of market principles to maintain efficiency. This mixture of market principles with socialism was called 'market socialism'. This policy was adopted in Yugoslavia after the early 1950s, in Hungary after 1968, in China, Poland, Bulgaria and the former Soviet Union in 1980s. But that too could not solve the problem of scarcity. This led to bureaucratic corruption and eventual collapse of socialist systems.

Market Socialism

Market socialism refers to an economic system where means of social production are held in public ownership, but allocation of resources is made according to market principles. Thus, product market, labour market and capital market come into existence side by side with the socialist system.

In the present age of disillusionment with 'revolutionary socialism', evolutionary socialism or democratic socialism is the only hope to promote social justice.

Social Justice

Social justice refers to the social policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community or mankind (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

CONCLUSION

In spite of some shortcomings, evolutionary socialism is an effective instrument for mitigating the rigours of capitalism. It is definitely better than the crude form of capitalism—a free market economy with unrestrained competition. Evolutionary socialism provides an opportunity to the common people to resist and reduce the harshness of the capitalist class within capitalist society itself. It fails to transform capitalism precisely for want of adequate, organized and consistent public pressure. The capitalist class manages to create an illusion of 'common welfare' by granting small concessions and reliefs to the exploited and hard-pressed sections. Social contradictions continue to thrive in such a situation. Once the exploited sections become conscious of these contradictions and make up their mind to fight them out, the ground is prepared for transformation of the capitalist system.

Even Marxian socialism postulates the emergence of class consciousness and a strong organization of the exploited class for bringing about revolution. If necessary consciousness and organization are present among the exploited sections, it should not be difficult for them to transform the capitalist system even through the ballot box. A combination of democracy and socialism is now regarded as not only possible, but logical and even inevitable. In the ultimate analysis, if democracy is real enough, its success will be reflected in the fulfilment of the aspirations of ordinary people, which are not very different from the socialist goals. It is now being increasingly realized that in highly industrialized modern states, armed revolutions have very little scope of being victorious. The constitutional method of securing the goals of socialism is, therefore, not entirely redundant, provided the exploited classes are on the alert, well-organized, vocal and seriously engaged in building up strong public pressure against the capitalist class.

IV
CURRENT DEBATES ON SOCIALISM

Various forms of socialism are usually described with relevant adjectives, *e.g.* utopian, scientific, evolutionary, revolutionary, etc. However, sometimes the plain term 'socialism' is used to convey its connotation in consonance with the Marxist theory. Thus the countries that organized their economy and polity according to Marxist ideology, *e.g.* the former USSR and East European countries (like Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, etc.), were described as 'socialist countries'. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) — who sought to consolidate the polity of USSR according to Marxist-Leninist ideology—gave the slogan of 'Socialism in One Country'. When the term 'socialism' is used in this sense, it becomes an issue of such debates as to how far socialism is compatible with nationalism or democracy. In this context, it is necessary at the outset to understand the characteristics of socialist system according to Marxist theory and practice.

Accordingly, socialist system comes into existence after the overthrow of capitalist system through a proletarian revolution. This system is characterized by social ownership of the major means of production. The production relations of the socialist society are based on co-operation and mutual assistance among the workers liberated from the capitalist exploitation. State power is still necessary, to be used for the oppression of reactionary forces and also to destroy the values and attitudes fostered by the capitalist system. In due course, as the last vestige of the old system is destroyed, the state as an institution becomes redundant and the stage is set for the 'withering away of the state'. The socialist system is, therefore, envisaged as eventually ushering in the epoch of a classless and stateless society, described as *communist* society.

Reactionary Forces

Reactionary forces refer to those forces which seek to reverse the direction of change, or to replace the new system by the old one. In a socialist system, reactionary forces seek to restore the capitalist system.

The socialist system, therefore, stands for that economic and political system which is established by the proletariat after a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. It is coterminous with the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This stage does not represent the final goal of revolution; it is only an interim stage of transition from capitalism to communism.

(a) CAN SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM GO TOGETHER?

It is said that Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95), who were born in Germany, were emigrants in England where they led their active life; so they had little comprehension of patriotic fervour. That is one reason behind their belief that nationalism had little scope in their socialist programme. They focused their attention on the class struggle which represented a social division of humanity into haves and have-nots throughout the world, transcending all national boundaries. They believed that whereas bourgeoisie in each country had its own special interests, the proletariat in all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy, and one and the same struggle.

Bourgeoisie and Proletariat

These are the two contending classes in modern capitalist society. Engles' note to the English edition of *Communist Manifesto* (1888) reads : "By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live."

In the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels noted that the proletariat would organize themselves at the national level as a political strategy, but then proceed to stage a revolution at the world scale:

> The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation. It is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.
>
> National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.
>
> The following slogan appears on the top of the *Communist Manifesto*: *Workers of all countries, unite!*
>
> The concluding note of the Communist Manifesto is equally significant:

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

In an earlier section of the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx and Engels outlined the distinctive features of the Communists in relation to other parties of workers which manifest the international character of the communist struggle :

> The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties...: In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.

Thus Marxism saw no contradiction between organizing the working class at national level and promoting the international struggle of the working class simultaneously. Marx himself conceded that there was absolutely no contradiction in the *international* workers' party striving for the establishment of the Polish nation. He even saw the movement for the independence of Ireland as a stimulus to a social revolution in England.

Lenin (1870-1924) in his struggle against imperialism focused on the right of different nations to self-determination. He saw the struggle for independence in the underdeveloped nations against their colonial rulers as a class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, which would usher in international socialist struggle. He even hoped that the Russian Revolution (1917) would herald an international socialist revolution.

However, Lenin's successor in the USSR, Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) sought to change the policy and insisted on building 'Socialism in One Country'. This goal had a strong nationalist connotation. Lenin had denounced this goal as 'Great Russian chauvinism', but Stalin's policy marked a clear departure from the communist policy of promoting international socialist revolution. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), Stalin's rival for leadership of the USSR, warned that the policy of 'Socialism in One Country' would lead to disastrous consequences for the socialist revolution. Trotsky had insisted that the victorious proletariat must try to promote revolutions in other countries, especially advanced ones, since progress towards socialism cannot go far within the confines of a single country, especially one (like Russia) with substantial elements of pre-capitalist relations to overcome. Trotsky postulated the doctrine of 'permanent revolution' in support of his stand. However, he was defeated in the struggle for power in the USSR where Stalin's policy became victorious.

Socialism in One Country

The principle of 'Socialism in One Country' was enunciated by the Russian leader, Joseph Stalin (1879-1953). This principle seeks to consolidate the achievements of socialism in one country rather than spreading it to other areas of the world. Stalin argued that the socialist system could be kept intact in a country like Russia in spite of its vast encirclement by capitalist countries.

Champions of international socialism hold that when socialism becomes

nationalism, it ceases to be socialism. This position cannot be upheld in the light of our own experience. During the Second World War (1939-45), Soviet Russia allied with the Western nations to defeat the forces of Fascism (Germany, Italy and Japan). During the period of Cold War (1945-91), the Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) offered a new interpretation of Leninism that rejects the inevitability of a major war between the leading Western and Communist states. This doctrine of Peaceful Coexistence (1956) became the basis of Soviet policy which called for both sides to avoid nuclear war and refrain from exporting revolution or counter-revolution. Though certain socialist countries of East Europe remained under the hegemony of the Soviet Union since the end of the Second World War (1945) till the collapse of socialism in the entire Soviet bloc (1991), yet the appeal of socialism was not confined to this bloc. Many third-world countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America adopted socialist path of development on their own. Today we have a number of socialist nations which enjoy full sovereignty as nations and play important role in international politics.

Cold War

Cold War refers to the period of intense ideological conflict between capitalist and socialist nations since the end of Second World War (1945) till the collapse of socialist systems in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union (1991). During this period major capitalist and socialist nations had formed their respective military alliances which were termed as power blocs. There was no armed conflict between the two groups, but a vigorous propaganda against each other was in full swing. Each of them wanted to demonstrate supremacy of its ideology and to enlist its following in the rest of the world. In international politics, this queer conflict created immense tension and threatened the world peace.

The term 'Cold War' in this sense was popularized by an American columnist, Walter Lippmann (1889-1974).

Third World

The term 'Third World' refers to those countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which were the victims of colonial exploitation in the past and are still characterized by a low level of economic and political development as compared to industrially advanced nations of the world. After their independence, they have adopted different types of political systems, including Western type or socialist type, in order to cope with the problems of nation-building and economic development.

The term 'Third World' in this sense was popularized by a French economist and demographer, Alfred Sauvy (1898-1990) who coined it in 1952.

(*b*) CAN SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY GO TOGETHER?

Socialists are not opposed to the principle of democracy. Rather they claim to be the champions of true democracy. However, they reject the practice and procedure of democracy prevailing in the capitalist countries. In any case, democracy is normally identified by the procedure and institutions of liberal democracy. Its compatibility with socialism should be examined in this light.

Milton Friedman (1912-2006), contemporary American economist and thinker, in his well-known work *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), argued that capitalism is the essential condition of individual freedom. He maintained that since freedom is the essence of democracy, democracy is compatible only with capitalism, and not with its antithesis, *i.e.* socialism.

Friedman says that all types of political systems are not compatible with all types of economic systems. Capitalism and socialism are economic systems; democracy and totalitarianism are political systems. Existence of capitalism is conducive to democracy while socialism is accompanied by totalitarianism. Advocates of democratic socialism believe that socialist economic system can be combined with democratic political system, which would provide for political freedom. Rejecting this proposition, Friedman argued that if a society maintains socialist economic system, it cannot protect individual freedom, and hence it cannot have democratic political system.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism refers to a system of governance in which the state seeks to regulate and control all aspects of life of its citizens—whether public or private. In other words, it seeks to direct all political, economic, social-cultural and intellectual activities of people towards fulfilling certain aims which are determined by the state itself. No citizen has the right or opportunity to criticize the state, or to propose any new aim.

According to Friedman, capitalism or a competitive market economy stands for an organization where bulk of economic activity is carried on in open market through private enterprise. As an economic system, capitalism promotes a free society in two ways. In the first place, freedom of private enterprise is itself a component of the broader concept of freedom. It is therefore an end-in-itself. Secondly, economic freedom is an indispensable means for the achievement of political freedom. As Friedman observed :

> Viewed as a means to the end of political freedom, economic arrangements are important because of their effect on the concentration or dispersion of power. The kind of economic organization that provides economic freedom directly, *viz.* competitive capitalism, also promotes political freedom because it separates economic power from political power and in this way enables the one to offset the other (*Capitalism and Freedom*; 1962).

Friedman cites history as evidence to affirm the close relation between a free market and political freedom. He finds many examples of correlation between political freedom and free market economy. Political freedom that existed in classical Greece and Roman Republic was an outcome of the growth of commerce. Thus Friedman does not confine the usage of the term 'capitalism' for its modern version; even the examples of ancient forms of commerce and industry come within the purview of capitalism in his view. So he asserts that capitalism is a necessary condition of freedom. Nevertheless it is not a sufficient condition thereof. Examples of the fascist states of Italy, Spain, Germany and

Japan or the absolutist states of Czarist Russia or Imperial Germany show that though their dominant economic organization was based on private enterprise, yet they failed to provide for political freedom to their citizens. So Friedman concedes: "It is therefore possible to have economic arrangements that are fundamentally capitalist and political arrangements that are not free."

In any case, a socialist economic system—which relies on collectivist economic planning—cannot maintain political freedom of the citizens. To prove his point, Friedman seeks to establish logical links between economic and political dimensions of freedom. He argues that the basic problem of social organization is how to coordinate the economic activities of large numbers of people. In advanced societies, the scale on which coordination is required, to take full benefits of development of modern science and technology, is enormously greater. Fundamentally, there are only two methods of coordinating the economic activities of millions of people. One is central administration involving the use of coercion, *i.e.* the techniques of 'totalitarian' government, and the other is voluntary cooperation of individuals, *i.e.* the technique of the market place in a democracy. Centralized socialist planning logically rules out the existence of political freedom just as capitalist enterprise based on voluntary cooperation of citizens logically affirms the existence of political freedom.

In capitalist society, economic power remains dispersed in several autonomous centres but political power has a tendency towards greater concentration. In socialist society, economic power is combined with political power which results in concentration of power and consequent loss of political freedom of individuals and groups. To maximize individual freedom, Friendman asserts that governments should be permitted only to handle those matters "which cannot be handled through the market at all, or can be handled only at so great a cost that the use of political channels may be preferable".

A critical examination of Friedman's arguments will show that his view regarding capitalism as well as socialism is somewhat biased. He assumes that the ultimate contracting parties under capitalism are individuals whereas in actual practice market operates through the competition of big corporations where individuals have practically no say. Such market cannot be eulogized as the custodian of individual freedom. Again under socialism, central planning is intended to maximize the satisfaction of social needs. It is not fair to dub this system out-and-out inimical to individual freedom. Friedman has sought to set aside 'democratic socialism' as a combination of incompatible principles.

On the other hand, champions of democratic socialism like Harold J. Laski (1893-1950), R.H. Tawney (1880-1962) and Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) have convincingly brought out the unity of goals of democracy and socialism, and the need to combine the two principles for evolving a sound social policy.

> I hope that socialism does not kill or suppress individuality; indeed I am attracted to it because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage.
>
> Jawarharlal Nehru

V
MAIN TENETS OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

While Marxism seeks to bring about socialism through revolutionary method, democratic socialism prefers evolutionary or democratic method. Champions of democratic socialism pay equal importance to democracy and socialism. They believe that the goals of democracy and socialism are not separable from each other: both stand for amelioration of the condition of the ordinary man. In effect, democratic socialism signifies use of the democratic method for achieving the socialist goal. At the same time, it is opposed to revolution against a democratically elected government. It seeks to modify Marxian socialism in some important details.

Main Tenets of Democratic Socialism

Democratic Socialism

↓

Pursuit of Socialism by Democratic Method (particularly through Parliamentary Democracy)

↓

Opposed to Revolution against Democratically Elected Government

PARTIAL SOCIALIZATION OF PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Democratic socialists hold that socialism does not require wholesale socialization of the means of social production and distribution. Instead, if some essential means of production and distribution are placed under state ownership so as to ensure the supply of essential goods and services for the bulk of the population, this would be a substantial achievement in the direction of socialism. In this sense, democratic socialism comes very close to the concept of welfare state.

Welfare State

Welfare state refers to the state that safeguards liberty of its citizens and also takes care of satisfying their basic needs, *e.g.* food, clothing, shelter, health care, elementary education and recreation, etc; particularly of those who cannot afford these things from their own income or other resources. It makes use of public resources and taxation of the relatively rich to provide for a vast network of social services and social security.

SATISFACTION OF MORAL AS WELL AS MATERIAL NEEDS

Democratic socialists seek to expand the goal of socialism. They insist that socialism should not be confined to satisfying material needs of human beings. It should also take care of their moral, intellectual and emotional needs so as to ensure a fuller development of the personality of each individual. Hence, the state should take care not only of food, clothing and shelter for the masses, but also for their education, recreation, preservation of their art and culture, etc.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

According to democratic socialists, an atmosphere of freedom is essential for the development of personality. Even if a society has abolished private property, put an end to economic exploitation and managed to satisfy the material needs of all individuals, such conditions will not be conducive to the fuller development of personality without ensuring the freedom of thought and expression, freedom of religion and worship, freedom of movement, and other similar democratic freedoms.

NO FORM OF DICTATORSHIP

Democratic socialism is opposed to all forms of dictatorship, even if it is a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as expounded by the Marxian theory of socialism. Dictatorship of any kind leads to the suppression of personality, and hence it is not conducive to human happiness.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

According to Marxism, 'dictatorship of the proletariat' refers to a form of organization of the state that comes into existence when organized working class overthrows capitalism and assumes full control of political power. It is characterized by the socialization of the major means of production, *de novo* planning of material production so as to serve social needs, provide for an effective right to work, education, health and housing for the masses, and further development of science and technology so as to multiply material production to achieve greater social satisfaction.

FREE COMPETITION FOR POWER

Democratic socialism treats democratic structures—free competition for power among political parties, freedom of pressure groups, parliamentary institutions with an effective role for the opposition, etc.—as essential for achieving the ends of socialism.

Among the modern thinkers, Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) made important contribution to the theory and practice of democratic socialism. Laski in fact sought to combine the ends of socialism with the democratic method of liberalism. In many of his famous works, particularly in his *Liberty in the Modern State* (1930), *State in Theory and Practice* (1935) and *A Grammar of Politics* (1938), Laski made a brilliant attempt to combine the concept of liberal freedom with the goal of socialist justice. Then, E.F.M. Durbin, in his *The Politics of Democratic*

Socialism (1940), enunciated the tenets of democratic socialism. Many countries of the world today are following the path of democratic socialism. Among these the Scandinavian countries—Sweden, Norway and Denmark—are the most notable. India also claims to follow the path of democratic socialism.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

R.H. Tawney (1880-1962) sought to secure socialist values through democratic structure. In his famous essay on *Equality* (1938), he argued that the claim of equality of human beings rested upon a sense of common humanity which led to the idea of the equal worth of each person. This did not imply equal capacities or equal potential of all persons but their fundamental moral equality. In Tawney's view, freedom does not lie in the absence of intentional coercion, but in the individual's self-fulfilment which is not merely his gratification. It involves the fulfilment of his duty, service and obligation. Even rights of the individual derive from a sense of social function and social service. They emanate from a democratically arrived-at idea of the common good.

Tawney believed that the socialist values of liberty and equality are not the ends-in-themselves; they are instrumental to the realization of the basic value, *i.e.* fellowship and a sense of community. Fellowship in this sense stands for right and principled relations between citizens, based upon equality and service. Such fellowship was essential to the maintenance of any society. In other words, Tawney was convinced that the communitarian aspect of socialism was indispensable to the cohesion of a democratic socialist society.

CONCLUSION

Democratic socialism seeks to provide for democratic rights and civil liberties as well as social-economic rights of citizens—a difficult combination indeed! If this could be achieved, it would serve as an ideal scheme for social justice. But democracy is a matter of procedure; it does not prescribe the goals of state policy. Adoption of the goals of social justice in a democratic state largely depends on two factors :

(*a*) Prevalence of a strong and discerning public opinion in favour of the goals of socialism so that those committed to these goals win majority in elections and they have a strong political will to implement their programme; and

(b) A strong resource-base for the state which enables it to provide for elaborate public services and social security without resorting to coercion and undue taxation.

If the leadership of a nation is able to motivate the people to work hard so as to raise production and mobilize resources, democratic socialism will have a good chance. This needs cultivation of a sense of duty, work culture and patriotism among citizens in general—a difficult task indeed! On the other hand, if the leadership resorts to very heavy taxation of the relatively well-placed sections, who have improved their standards of living by dint of their talents, efforts,

enterprise and frugality, it might mar the incentive and thereby impoverish the resource-base of the nation. This will erode the chances of democratic socialism.

VI
NARENDRA DEV AS EXPONENT OF INDIAN SOCIALISM

Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956) is regarded the pioneer of modern Indian socialist thought. Like Western socialists, Indian socialists also believed in establishing social ownership of major means of production to pave the way for the social-economic reconstruction. However, Indian tradition of socialist thought marks a departure from the Western tradition because the Western tradition focuses on materialistic amelioration of the working class whereas the Indian tradition largely seeks to combine the materialistic welfare with the spiritual emancipation of the working classes as well as peasantry and other poor sections of society. In any case, as socialists they accord precedence to the materialistic welfare of the deprived sections. Narendra Dev's mode of thinking represents a typical model of Indian socialist thought.

MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIALISM

Narendra Dev sought to evolve his socialist ideas by combining the Marxian doctrine of materialism, class conflict and scientific socialism as well as the Gandhian ideals of non-violence and moral regeneration with the anti-imperialistic struggle associated with India's independence movement.

Materialism

Materialism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards matter as the essence of the universe, and treats 'consciousness' as the mere reflection of the prevailing condition of the matter. According to this view, social institutions are shaped by the material conditions of society. In this sense, it is the opposite of 'idealism' or 'spiritualism'.

Class Conflict

In Marxist theory, class conflict refers to the constant conflict or struggle between the dominant and dependent classes which began with the emergence of private property. The dominant class is comprised of the owners of means of social production. The dependent class which thrives on labour, is oppressed and exploited by the dominant class. The antagonistic interests of these classes cannot be reconciled. The class conflict will continue until the abolition of private property and the consequent emergence of a classless society.

In his seminal work *Socialism and the National Revolution* (1936), Narendra Dev sought to reinterpret Marxian view of materialism. He observed that Marx did not dwell on the relative significance of the 'matter' and 'mind' (*i.e.* the idea or consciousness). Narendrea Dev argued that in human life, these two elements

are equally important. In other words, both the material world and the spiritual world should be given due importance. Man cannot seek his emancipation by devoting himself exclusively to one of these. Classical Marxism regards material world as the base, and consciousness as the superstructure whose character is determined by the character of the base. On the contrary, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) held that man could seek his emancipation by pursuing his spiritual goals. Narendra Dev rejects both these views. He contends that man may upgrade his consciousness to any extent, his life will remain dependent on the conditions of the material world. If these conditions are not congenial, his freedom or emancipation would remain a far cry. Material conditions of human life are closely linked with the economy. Human consciousness can effect the economy, but economy also effects this consciousness. If material conditions are oppressive, even a profound ascetic would fail to exercise self-restraint.

According to Narendra Dev, human freedom is a moral concept; and this can be realized only in an atmosphere of economic equality. In other words, economic equality is a necessary condition of moral order. Both imperialism and capitalism tend to destroy human freedom. Imperialism deprives the people of one country of their freedom by establishing the domination of another country over them, while capitalism destroys freedom of one class within a country by placing it under the domination of another class. However, capitalism is preferable to feudalism or imperialism. In any case, capitalism simply provides formal freedom to the masses; they can attain substantive freedom only under socialism. In this sense, socialism is a synonym of the moral order.

Imperialism

Imperialism refers to the policy, practice or process through which a strong nation uses its military, political and economic power to expand its rule and extend its control over other, distant political communities for the purpose of economic advantage, military security, international prestige and establishing its cultural domination.

Fedualism

Feudalism refers to the system of economic, political and social organization which flourished in the medieval Europe. Economically, it was based on agriculture where social status of different sections of society was determined by the land tenure. Land was held by various levels of landlords in return for homage and military service to be rendered to the king. It was tilled by serfs who were obliged to render labour services and dues to the landlords. All sections of society including clerics, soldiers, administrators and toilers were tied to each other by mutual obligations. With the advent of Industrial Revolution in the mid of the eighteenth century, it became necessary to break this system in order to secure freedom of the new entrepreneurial class as well as the new working class.

CLASS CONFLICT AND NEW LIFE MOVEMENT

Narendra Dev differs from the Gandhian principle of class cooperation, and

upholds the Marxian principle of class conflict. However, he sought to redefine the character of the revolutionary class in the Indian context. Like Marx, he argued that the history of human society is the history of constant conflict between antagonistic classes. The class that seeks to transform the existing social situation must gain victory in class conflict and establish its control on material conditions, for which it should be stronger than its antagonistic class. New social situation reflects the moral sense of the masses, hence it sets the standard of social morality. In this way Narendra Dev affirms the mass basis of morality.

Narendra Dev argues that the contemporary society is characterized by the majority of the working class and its associates, that is the peasantry and the intelligentsia, hence their moral sense adequately represents the standards of social morality. Masses in India do not fall in any uniform category. They are not confined to industrial workers, as envisaged by the Marxism. Broadly speaking, they include industrial workers, plantation workers, peasants and agricultural workers besides the intellectuals. If they are allowed to form separate organizations to pursue their respective interests, their power will be scattered, and they would hardly achieve any success. All these sections are afflicted by the terror of imperialism and capitalism. It is therefore imperative to unify them in order to strengthen the socialist movement. This movement would not have a uniform class character, but it would be devoted to a single aim: to overthrow imperialism and capitalism and establish social ownership of the major means of production. Narendra Dev described this combined movement of all deprived sections as the 'New Life Movement'.

Under the New Life Movement, all categories of workers, peasants and intellectuals will have to cooperate and collaborate in order to challenge the forces of imperialism and capitalism. The workers in industrial and semi-industrial establishments would carry on their movement through the 'General Strike' (as advocated by Georges-Eugene Sorel (1847-1922), eminent French socialist). The peasants would organize 'Kissan Sabhas' (Peasants Councils) to press for their demands of agricultural reforms. However, the Acharya deprecated 'Peasantism' which implied a split between the interests of workers and peasants and led to an unhealthy conflict between the village and the town. Narendra Dev further recognized the need of democracy in order to promote reconciliation between the interests of all deprived sections of society.

CONCLUSION

Acharya Narendra Dev argued that the idea of socialism was not a stranger to the Indian culture, as it conformed to our moral tradition. Indian culture insists on spiritual equality of all human beings, but it must be supplemented by their material equality in order to secure their substantive equality. Scientific socialism alone is capable of achieving moral equality of human beings. As the laws of natural science enable us to evolve suitable technology for different situations, so the laws of scientific socialism would enable the peoples of different countries to evolve suitable strategies for their respective socialist movements. In Marxism, the concept of stateless society represents the logical conclusion of its inherent

assumptions. This concept should be used as a model. Each country should determine the goals of its socialist movement in the light of its own culture and in view of its particular needs.

VII
NEHRU'S VISION OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Indian philosopher and statesman, was an ardent champion of democratic socialism. As S. Gopal *(The Mind of Jawaharlal Nehru;* 1980) significantly observed :

> Nehru...saw himself a libertarian Marxist, and his idea of socialism encompassed at every stage a large and irreducible measure of civil liberty. One could have neither democracy nor socialism without the other; in fact, each thrived on the other. Nehru rejected any mechanical view of human nature and looked forward to a socialist society which, by removing economic and social obstacles and inhibitions, would provide greater scope for individual freedom.

Nehru was impressed by Marxist thought but he could not accept it in its entirety because of his intense love of liberty. He accepted the Marxist analysis of the past, but he was not convinced by the Marxist projection of the future. His commitment to civil liberties prevented him from accepting the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat. He eulogized only that form of socialism which not only protected but nourished individual freedom. Way back in 1939, he wrote in a letter to Subhas Chandra Bose:

> I suppose I am temperamentally and by training an individualist, and intellectually a socialist... I hope that socialism does not kill or suppress individuality; indeed I am attracted to it because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage.

Nehru believed that political democracy would never turn out to be a real democracy unless it met the socialist objective of reducing economic inequalities. During his speech in Parliament in 1952, Nehru observed :

> If there is economic inequality in the country, all the political democracy and all the adult suffrage in the world cannot bring about real democracy. Therefore, your objective must be to put an end to all differences between class and class, to bring about more equality and a more unitary society— in other words, to strive for economic democracy. We have to think in terms of ultimately developing into a classless society.

Nehru relied on the socialist method of planning for economic development, but he strongly rejected the authoritarian character of planning. In India planning must come from the democratic set-up which had been established under the Indian Constitution (1950). So Nehru further observed :

> In view of the fact that we function under a democratic set-up, which we have

> deliberately adopted and enshrined in our Constitution and in this Parliament, any planning that we do must naturally be within that set-up. The Planning Commission does not have the right to draw up a programme that has no relation to our Constitution or to the set-up under which we work.

Nehru wished to transform economic structure of India without departing from the democratic path. Again in 1952, he spoke from All India Radio :

> We have to aim deliberately at a social philosophy which seeks a fundamental transformation of this structure, at a society which is not dominated by the urge for private profit and by individual greed and in which there is fair distribution of political and economic power. We must aim at a classless society, based on cooperative effort, with opportunities for all. To realize this we have to pursue peaceful methods in a democratic way.

Nehru was extremely sensitive to the problem of appalling poverty which afflicted India, and wanted to overcome it without compromising individual freedom. In his speech at the Indian Merchants' Chamber at Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1958, Nehru asserted :

> The problem which we have to face is how to cross the barrier of poverty without paying that terrible cost and without infringing individual freedom.

Nehru reaffirmed his adherence to democratic values as and when he expressed his faith in socialism. That is why he warned against the adoption of rigid or doctrinaire socialism. In his speech in Lok Sabha initiating discussion on the Draft outline of the Third Five Year Plan in 1960, Nehru made this point:

> If we want India to progress, if we want India to be prosperous and if we want to raise the standards of India, we want a socialist society in India. There is no lack of firmness about that. But we do not aim at any rigid or doctrinaire form of socialism.

In a nutshell, Nehru constantly tried to balance the claims of democracy and socialism in his pursuit of social progress in India, and the world.

VIII

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S IDEA OF INDIAN SOCIALISM

Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan (1902-79)— popularly called JP — was a scholar and freedom fighter who is regarded an eminent exponent of Indian socialism. At the outset, he rejected the Marxian model of socialism as adopted in the then Soviet Union, although he had started with the faith in Marxism. JP realized that the authoritarian and totalitarian character of Soviet Communism, derived from the concept of the 'dictatorship of the porletariat', was against the spirit of true socialism. Similarly, JP severely criticized the Chinese Communists for their cruel and inhuman attitude toward Tibet. JP stood for humane and democratic form of

socialism which seemed to be in consonance with the spirit of Indian culture.

ESSENCE OF SOCIALISM

As a votary of socialism, JP recognized the economic foundations of politics. According to his well-known writing *Towards Struggle* (1946), socialism refers to an elaborate theory of social-economic reconstruction. It is informed by the notion of equality. Equality is a complex principle which must be analysed in proper perspective. All men cannot be considered as equal in terms of their innate capabilities. In this sense, the claim of 'natural equality' is not based on reason. But the prevailing gross inequalities among men in the social-economic sphere are not the consequence of their natural inequalities. These stem from the disproportionate control over the major means of production in society. These inequalities must be removed in order to afford equal opportunities of self-development to all men. This can be accomplished by creating social-economic equality, and not merely by creating a psychological impression of equality among men.

JP argued that you cannot promote cultural creativity among men until their economic needs are fulfilled. This can be achieved only through socialism which calls for comprehensive planning. Socialization of the major means of production would be a necessary condition of this arrangement. JP recommended collective ownership and control over large-scale production in order to implement socialist policy in India. He particularly insisted on the nationalization of heavy transport, shipping, mining and heavy industries. He held that the exploitation of the bulk of people can be stopped only when they become capable of controlling their economic and political destiny.

In the Indian context, JP discovered a new ground of justification of socialism. He argued that the basic philosophy of socialism fits into the long-cherished values of the Indian culture itself. This culture expects people to abstain from acquisitiveness, avarice and the exclusive pursuit of self-interest. It does not eulogize the satisfaction of trivial physical desires. It exhorts them to work in close cooperation and willingly share the fruit of their labour. The Indian ideal of *Lok Samgraha* is akin to the spirit of socialism. It is therefore not correct to say that in India the idea of socialism has been imported from abroad. However, it is true that the economic principles of modern socialism were systematically formulated in the West. In any case the spirit of socialism was present in the tradition of Indian culture.

Lok Samgraha

Lok Samgraha refers to an underlying ideal of Hindu ethics which implies 'protection and welfare of the world'. This ideal is deeply concerned with the human happiness, the stability of society and the preservation of moral order. According to the Hindu scriptures, *Lok Samgraha* is a divine function which is required to be emulated by each temporal authority as well as by a human being devoted to his duty.

SARVODAYA, DEMOCRACY AND TOTAL REVOLUTION

JP sought to develop the idea of true socialism by combining it with Mahatma Gandhi's idea of *Sarvodaya*. *Sarvodaya* implies uplift of all, that is the welfare of everyone although it is especially inclined toward amelioration of the condition of the underprivileged. When a policy caters to everybody's good, it leaves no scope for the clash of interests between different sections. Hence there is no place for the Marxian idea of class conflict in JP's model of socialism. On the contrary, it is intended to promote the Gandhian idea of class cooperation.

Sarvodaya

The term 'Sarvodaya' was coined by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), modern Indian social philosopher and activist. Literally it means 'uplift of all', 'rise of all' or 'awakening of all'. In a society where the few are endowed with knowledge, power, wealth and honour, and a very large numbers are languishing, *Sarvodaya* seeks uplift of all. Apparently, this seems paradoxical, because if all rise uniformly, how shall we bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, the high and the low? This point was adequately dealt with by Vinoba Bhave (1895-1982), eminent Gandhian. In *Harijan* (1948), Vinoba maintained that in this unhappy world of ours, everyone needs to be uplifted because everyone of us is fallen. The rich are fallen morally and spiritually; their wealth is derived from exploitation of others. The poor are fallen materially and culturally. So both need to be uplifted in their respective areas of degradation.

As *Sarvodaya* seeks uplift of all to bring them closer to each other, it does not envisage conflict between the rich and the poor, the high and the low. As a votary of purity of means as well as ends, Gandhi was convinced that violent means cannot be used effectively to achieve a non-violent end like fraternity.

In a wider context, JP sought to replace the politics of power by the politics of cooperation. Like Gandhi, JP saw *Swaraj* at the individual level, *i.e.* the self-discipline as the medium of spontaneous cooperation between individuals. Further, JP saw true socialism as an instrument of liberation of mankind from imperialist domination as well as feudal exploitation which was still persisting in India and other third-world countries. That is why JP applied the weapon of socialism during India's struggle for independence as well as for social-economic reconstruction of India after independence. Then JP recommended a new structure and approach to democracy for India after independence to achieve the goals of fraternity and social justice. In a nutshell, precedence of *lokniti* (politics of people) over *rajniti* (politics of power) and that of lokshakti (power of people) over *rajshakti* (power of the state) is the keynote of JP's concept of true democracy.

Besides, during the Bihar movement in early 1970s, JP floated the idea of 'total revolution' (*Sampoorna Kranti*) as the logical outcome of the principle of true democracy. In short, total revolution refers to mass upsurge against the rampant corruption and authoritarianism in the prevailing 'democratic' regime. It called for fundamental reforms in the electoral, administrative, economic, social, political and educational systems of the country. Total revolution envisaged transformation

of the entire social order including total elimination of economic disparities and social discrimination, not the mere replacement of the existing power-holders by another set of power-holders who would follow the same style of politics.

MODEL OF TRUE DEMOCRACY

In order to evolve a model of true democracy that would secure the spirit of cooperation and the goal of social justice, JP proceeds to analyse the existing models of democracy (or so-called democracy) and enumerates their faults which must be rectified before hand. He argued that the so-called 'people's democracy' as adopted in East European countries largely represented the replica of the communist system prevailing in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, the political structure intended for the pursuit of socialism had been reduced to political rivalry and conflict between the dominant factions within the Communist Party. This distorted and corrupted form of socialism had led to concentration of political power and economic privileges in the hands of a small, dominant group within the party in power. In short, this form of state socialism was a poor substitute for true socialism, made worse under the dictatorship of a heartless bureaucracy. This system was not at all conducive to freedom of citizens which was a necessary condition for working of true socialism as well as true democracy.

Then JP considered various forms of non-Western-type democracy as tried in some third-world countries. Champions of these forms of democracy claimed to accommodate the idea of democracy within their indigenous traditions and contemporary conditions. JP observed that these models, variously described as basic democracy or guided democracy, etc. simply sought to carry out the will of their popular leaders rather than the will of the people. They did not qualify as genuine democracy in any sense.

Finally, Western democracy—which claimed to be true democracy—sought to combine political liberalism with capitalist economy as well as some features of welfare state. This model of democracy was patently unfit to implement true socialism. On the economic side, it harboured capitalism; on the political side, it facilitated the working of democratic elitism. Hence it was far removed from the spirit of true socialism as well as true democracy. The so-called free competition between political parties in this model of democracy served as a cover for the rivalry between competing *elites*.

Democratic Elitism

Democratic elitism refers to a theory of democracy which concedes that in a liberal democracy, power is always exercised by anyone from the competing *elites, i.e.* the chosen few who excel in society because of their talents or organizational capabilities. However, this system enables the ordinary people to examine as to which of the *elites* is more competent to look after their interests. So at the time of election, they vote for the *elite* of their choice in order to fulfil their aspirations. This view of democracy relegates the importance of citizen-participation to the background.

JP further argued that the Western-type democracies were characterized by the

dominance of private corporations and bureaucracy which led to the centralization of power. With the growth of science and technology, government was becoming the business of smaller and smaller numbers of people. This state of affairs is not suited to the implementation of socialist programme.

Instead of the prevailing models, JP projects the system of 'partyless democracy' to carry out *Sarvodaya*-based socialist programme. This model is designed to ensure universal citizen-participation. It has been outlined in his two important writings: *From Socialism to Sarvodaya* (1957); and *Swaraj for the People* (1961). It represents the structure of a truly decentralized democracy. JP describes his model as *Panchayati Raj* which is akin to Gandhian scheme of *Gram Swaraj*. While the existing forms of democracy function as 'government from above', JP's vision of *Panchayati Raj* represents '*Swaraj* from below'. In the political sphere, it envisages widespread decentralization of administrative, legislative and juducial powers; in the economic sphere, it projects a widely decentralized economic order.

> There can be no democracy nor a liberal institution without politics. The true antidote to the perversions of politics is more politics and better politics; not the negation of politics.
>
> Jayaprakash Narayan

The economic structure of *Sarvodaya* democracy is designed to comprise a network of many local and regional small-scale industries, some central large-scale industires, and a large number of communitarian farms, each collectively owned and managed by the whole village. Its political structure will comprise a network of *Gram Sabhas* or *Nagar Sabhas* (each consisting of all adults of a village, town or neighbourhood depending on the size of the locality concerned) as its base. Then two distinct higher structures would be raised on this base. For the first structure, *Gram Sabhas* will indirectly elect the *Panchayat Samitis* (Bloc Committees) by consensus, and the *Panchayat Samitis* will in turn similarly elect *Zila Parishads* (District Councils). These organs taken together will form a three-tier structure of local self-government. Then for the second structure, *Gram Sabhas* and *Nagar Sabhas* will elect *Vidhan Sabhas* (State Assemblies) and *Lok Sabha* (National Parliament) through the process of respective electoral colleges.

There is little room for any role of political parties in this arrangement. JP was convinced that political parties always play a dubious role under any type of political system. They cause fragmentation of communities by creating dissentions among people on social, economic and political issues, and let their energies go waste in pursuit of their trivial differences. Again, political parties tend to impose their own politics on people in order to outwit their rivals. People do not understand their designs, nor they are likely to take interest in the issues raised by the crooked politicians. *If people are not misguided by rival political parties, they would willingly cooperate in pursuit of the common good.* In this respect, JP's thinking closely corresponds to the contemporary philosophy of communitarianism. However, Western communitarians largely tend to accept the existing model of liberal democracy rather than projecting any idea of a partyless

democracy. Liberal democracy admits more than one political parties freely competing for political power.

Communitarianism

Communitarianism refers to a political outlook which seeks to restore the broken bond between individual and the community. It makes the individual realize that he owes his existence and personality to the society. According to this view, different individuals are not isolated units but they constitute the threads of the social fabric. Their individual good is the integral part of the common good; they can achieve their good only by pursuing the common good, and not by seeking their self-interests individually. While liberalism insists on the rights of individual, communitarianism focuses on his duties and obligations. Communitarianism motivates people to cooperate whole-heartedly in pursuit of the common good.

JP has also suggested the necessary steps for transition from the present stage to a 'partyless democracy'. According to his plan, at the initial stages of *Sarvodaya* movement, different political parties will be invited to participate in a common programme, forgetting their ideological differences. When adequate understanding is developed among them, they would tend to obliterate their separate identities, accept a unanimous programme, and implement it in close cooperation.

Critics have pointed out that JP has projected an ideal social order which would be conducive to human happiness only if it could be materialized in actual practice. However, given the ground realities of human nature and political forces, prospects of its materialization seem to be bleak. *Like communitarianism, JP's social thought embodies a strong moral philosophy, but it does not embody equally strong political philosophy.*

Distinction Between Marxian Socialism and JP's Socialism

The Issue	*Marxian Socialism*	*JP's Socialism*
Target	Satisfaction of Material Needs	Satisfaction of Material as well as Spiritual Needs
Status of the Classes	Class Conflict between haves and have-nots is inevitable until the final revolution	Class Conflict may be contained by adopting the policy of *Sarvodaya* (uplift of all)
Procedure of Revolution	Start Revolution in the Base (Mode of Economic Production); Superstructure will be transformed automatically	Revolution should comprehend the Base as well as the Superstructure (*i.e.* legal, political, cultural as well as intellectual structures of society)
Organization Recommended	Supremacy of the Communist Party	Partyless Democracy

Q. 1. "Socialism is like a hat that has lost its shape because everybody wears it." Elucidate and comment.

2. In what sense socialism is not compatible with nationalism or with democracy? Examine the issues of this debate.

3. Do the goals of democracy and socialism coincide anywhere? Discuss with reference to Nehru's vision of democratic socialism.

4. Outline the salient features of Indian socialist thought with reference to the contribution of Narendra Dev and JP.

15

Principles of Marxism

> Natural science will in time incorporate the science of man, just as the science of man will incorporate natural science: there will be one science.
>
> Karl Marx (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of* 1844)

> Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history.
>
> Friedrich Engels' *Epitaph at Marx's Graveyard* (1883)

I
WHAT IS MARXISM?

Marxism derives its name from that of Karl Marx (1818-83), famous German economist and social philosopher of the nineteenth century who is the chief exponent of this theory. It is interesting to recall that this term was unknown in Marx's own life-time. Friedrich Engels (1820-95), close friend and collaborator of Marx, once reported the following comment made by Marx himself: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist." Marx probably said so as he did not claim to offer a comprehensive worldview. It is also possible that he did not advance such a claim out of modesty. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, G.V. Plekhanov (1856-1918), Russian Marxist, announced that 'Marxism is a whole worldview.' However, despite this name, Marxism should not be regarded as a system of thought exclusively belonging to Marx. Marxism, in fact, comprises a rich tradition of social thought—a living tradition, with immense possibilities.

Worldview

Worldview refers to a system of thought which explains the present status of world society, tries to find solution to its problems, and determines the way to shape its future.

Marxism, in its proper sense, first appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century in response to the oppressive conditions created by the capitalist system. It will be recalled that liberalism arose in the seventeenth century as a philosophy of human freedom, but by the middle of the nineteenth century it had become clear that the classical form of liberalism, with its doctrine of *laissez-faire* and free market economy, had failed to create conditions of human freedom. Liberalism had achieved the goal of establishing capitalism under which a tiny class of capitalists enjoyed special power and privileges at the expense of the large majority of the working class. The legal and political equality sought by the exponents of liberalism had been achieved with tremendous economic inequalities and consequent injustice. Early champions of liberalism had hoped that the elimination of governmental restrictions on business and industry would usher in an era of universal improvement in the material conditions of life. But actual experience showed that unbridled capitalism had produced socially disastrous consequences. The tremendous increase of wealth was cornered by a small section which happened to own the major means of production while the large majority of the industrial population was forced to a sub-human level of living. Successful bankers and market speculators increased their wealth by leaps and bounds while the slum-dwelling working classes were living under the constant threat of insecurity, malnutrition, discomfort, disease and death. These developments belied all the humanitarian hopes of universal economic progress.

Capitalism

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as market demand. The state follows the policy of *laissez-faire*, *i.e.* non-intervention in the economic activities of individuals.

The first response to this horrible condition came in the form of an early socialist movement, which opposed the policy of free market competition and drew attention to the deteriorating conditions of the working classes. Early socialists like Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Louis Blanc (1811-82) in France advocated a more or less centralized economy under state control. Some others sought to project images of model communities governed by the principle of 'free cooperation' instead of 'free competition' harboured by the capitalist system. Robert Owen (1771-1858) in England and Charles Fourier (1772-1837) in France produced elaborate plans of setting up such model communities. P.J. Proudhon (1809-65) in France hoped to set up a nationwide system of decentralized workers' cooperatives which would bargain with one another for the mutual exchange of goods and services. All these thinkers knew clearly what was wrong with the world, but they were not clear as to what to do about it for they suggested only visionary solutions—far removed from the harsh realities of actual life. In other words, they had arrived at a correct

diagnosis of the ills of the capitalist system, but had no clear conception of the remedy. Their philosophy is, therefore, rightly described as '*utopian socialism*'.

Utopian

Utopian refers to something resembling a utopia—an imaginary island governed by a perfect social and political system, but incapable of realization in practice. *Utopia* was the title of Sir Thomas More's famous book published in 1516. Utopians were the thinkers who, being dissatisfied with the existing state of society, sought to ventilate their dissatisfaction by creating imaginary pictures of an ideal society where property was held in common and injustice was unknown.

Utopian Socialism

An early form of socialism evolved by some humanitarian philosophers in England and France. It aimed at the emancipation of the working class from the oppressive conditions created by the capitalist system. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) dubbed it utopian socialism in order to distinguish it from their own concept of scientific socialism.

Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Charles Fourier (1772-1837), are regarded the prominent exponents of utopian socialism. They sought to create extremely fascinating pictures of an ideal social and political order, far removed from harsh realities of life. These thinkers seldom realized that society was not at all prepared for a leap from private to common ownership of industry, and that human nature could not be transformed simply by projecting the vision of a perfect society free from inequality, exploitation and injustice.

During the decades beginning with the 1830s and the 1840s, the ideas of the utopian socialists were subjected to severe criticism by a group of brilliant writers committed to fundamental social change, notably by Karl Marx, a German scholar, and Freidrich Engels, young German businessman residing in England. *Marx and Engels sought to replace utopian socialism by scientific socialism* for the analysis of social problems and finding their solution. The solution came in the form of an elaborate philosophy which is now recognized as Marxism. Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* (1848) came out with an interpretation of the role of the working classes in the past, present and future of mankind. It also gave a clarion call to workers of all countries to unite for the purpose of securing their own emancipation and, through that emancipation, the freedom of all mankind. Other leading works on this theme include Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), *Capital*, Vol. I (1861-79), Vol. II (1885) and Vol. III (1894) (Vol. II and III edited by Engels), and Engels' *Anti-Dühring* (1877-78).

> The Socialist and Communist systems... of St. Simon, Fourier, Owen and others... still dream of experimental realization of their social Utopias.
>
> Marx and Engels (*Communist Manifesto*; 1848)

Scientific Socialism

Scientific socialism refers to the theory of socialism based on the scientific laws derived from historical analysis. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) are the chief exponents of this theory. They held that various stages of historical development are the manifestations of contradictions in material conditions which necessarily push human society toward the goal of socialism. *Whereas utopian socialism regards socialism as a moral choice, scientific socialism considers it a historical necessity.*

In short, Marxism may be defined as a set of political and economic principles founded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engles in order to lay scientific foundations of socialism. It seeks to understand the problems of human society through historical analysis and treats history as a process of conflict between antagonistic forces and classes. This conflict arises from the faults in the mode of production in which one class comes to gain ownership and control of the means of social production and resorts to economic exploitation of the other class which is constrained to earn its living only by its labour power. This conflict reaches its peak in the age of capitalism when it can be resolved by overthrowing capitalism, placing all means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forest, machinery and capital, etc.) under social ownership and control, enforcing universal labour and ensuring full development of the forces of production.

Exploitation

Exploitation refers to a form social oppression in which one party takes undue advantage of the vulnerable position of another party. The stronger party uses the physical and mental capacities—resources, talents and skills, etc.— of its victim for its own profit or gratification of its own desires.

II
BROAD STREAMS OF MARXISM

The original tenets of Marxism — as a scientific system of thought — are identified as *Classical Marxism*. Its chief exponents include, apart from Marx and Engles themselves, V.I. Lenin (1870-1924), Russian revolutionary and thinker, Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), Polish activist, and Mao Zedong (1893-1976), Chinese revolutionary and thinker. The wider implications of Marxism, including humanist thought of the Young Marx and its structuralist reinterpretation, are broadly identified as *Neo-Marxism*. In a nutshell, Classical Marxism holds that private property divides society into dominant and dependent classes with irreconcilable class interests. It is held together only by the ideological power of the dominant class. Human history moves towards its goal of human freedom through the revolutionary destruction of inherent contradictions in society culminating in the emergence of a classless society. Neo-Marxism, on the other hand, seeks to analyse the subtle aspects of the phenomenon of dominance and dependence, distortions in the contemporary

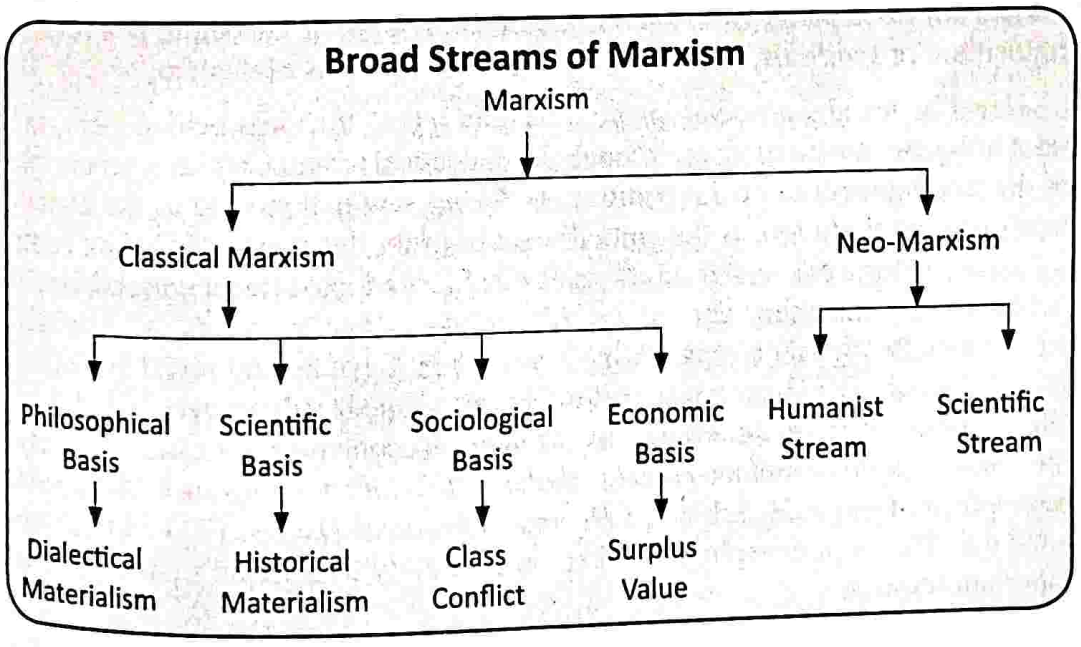
civilization and the possible ways to human emancipation.

Young Marx

Karl Marx (1818-83) as the author of his earliest work is known as Young Marx. This work remained unpublished during his lifetime. It was discovered from the archives of German Social Democrats as late as 1927, and later published as *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. It is distinguished from Marx's later work which is characterized by scientific rigour: Marx's early work contains his humanist thought on communism, and focuses on the concepts of alienation and freedom. It exposes the dehumanizing effect of capitalism.

Classical Marxism and *Neo-Marxism* may be identified as the two broad streams of Marxism. Classical Marxism flows into four sub-streams which constitute its basic principles. The principle of Dialectical Materialism represents its philosophical basis; the principle of Historical Materialism represents its scientific or empirical basis; the principle of Class Conflict represents its sociological basis; and finally, the principle of Surplus Value represents its economic basis.

Neo-Marxism may be identified by its two sub-streams: Humanist stream (which largely deals with the problem of alienation and freedom); and Scientific stream (which is primarily concerned with a review of the relation between base and superstructure in the light of the contemporary reality).



III
DILECTICAL MATERIALISM

Dialectical materialism represents the philosophical basis of Marxism. It may be recalled that G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831), famous German philosopher, believed that 'idea' or 'consciousness' was the essence of the universe. It was the force behind all

historical developments. Marx rejected this view and postulated that 'matter' was the essence of the universe, which embodied the force behind all manifestations of social change. For Marx, each stage of social development represented the corresponding stage of development of the material conditions of society. Thus Marx advanced the theory of 'materialism' against Hegel's theory of 'idealism'.

Idealism

Idealism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'idea' or 'consciousness' as the essence of the universe and treats all social institutions as the manifestation of the prevailing idea.

Materialism

Materialism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'matter' as the essence of the universe and treats 'consciousness' as the mere reflection of the prevailing material conditions.

Hegel had tried to explain the mechanism of social change through dialectical method. *Marx sought to combine Hegel's dialectical method with his own philosophy of materialism*. The term dialectical originally referred to the process whereby ideas are formed and clarified in the course of intellectual debate. A proposition, or *thesis*, is first advanced, and then challenged by a counter-proposition, or *antithesis*. Since both are apt to be partly true, the normal outcome of their encounter is a revised proposition, or *synthesis*, that combines the valid elements of the two.

Hegel believed that social institutions only reflect the ideas behind them, and that it is the movement of ideas, through the dialectical process, which is reponsible for the development of social institutions. Hegel saw nation-state as the highest stage of social evolution, as the embodiment of truth, 'the march of God on earth' — the perfect form of social institutions. While Marx adopted Hegel's mechanism of social change — the framework of '*thesis*', '*antithesis*' and '*synthesis*' — he refused to recognize the 'idea' or consciousness as the real force behind social evolution. Instead, Marx believed, the social institutions are shaped by the material conditions of human life, which are determined by the mode of economic production in society. Thus *Marx sought to replace Hegel's 'dialectical idealism' by his own 'dialectical materialism'*. George H. Sabine (*A History of Political Theory*; 1973 edition) has noted that Marx's philosophy is marked by continuity with Hegel's philosophy in important respects:

> In the first place, he (Marx) continued to believe that the dialectic was a powerful logical method uniquely capable of demonstrating a law of social development, and in consequence his philosophy, like Hegel's, was a philosophy of history... Though Marx constructed his philosophy as a form of materialism, he still used the dialectic to support a theory of social progress in which higher moral values are necessarily realized. In the second place, for Marx as for Hegel the driving force of social change is struggle, and the determining factor in the last resort is power. The struggle is between social classes rather than nations, and

the power is economic rather than political, political power being in Marx's theory a consequence of economic position.

Comparative Study of Hegel and Marx

The Issue	*Hegel's View*	*Marx's View*
Philosophical Basis	Idealism	Materialism
Path of Development	Dialectical	Dialectical
Medium of Progress	War among Nations	Class Conflict
Final Stage of Development	Supremacy of the Nation-State	Classless and Stateless Society

Engels (*Anti-Dühring*; 1878) sought to define dialectics as 'the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought'. He identified three laws of dialectics which can be illustrated with suitable examples from the material world; hence they exemplify *the laws of dialectical materialism*:

(1) *The transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa*: At certain temperatures (quantity), water is converted into ice or steam (change in quality); water, ice and steam could be identified as changes in the quality of the same thing with changes in temperature (quantity);

(2) *The interpenetration of opposites*: Hard and soft are opposite of each other, but in the material world they interpenetrate into each other; iron is hard, but it can be moulded into different shapes which shows that it is also soft; a flower is soft but it can stay in its shape which shows that it is also hard; and finally,

(3) *The negation of negation*: This is the basic principle of progress. *Every stage of social development contains the seeds of its own decay*; its decay is followed by a higher stage of development until a perfect society is evolved. In the material world, when we sow a seed, it sprouts. In this process, the seed is destroyed. The seed-bud which appears is the negation of the seed. Then it grows into plant. In this process, the seed-bud is destroyed. The plant is the negation of the seed-bud. Thereafter ear of corn grows on it and the plant dries and decays. The ear of corn is the negation of the plant. It reproduces seed in larger quantity and better quality. This is the symptom of progress.

Application of the laws of dialectics in social life is demonstrated through the principle of historical materialism.

IV
HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

While dialectical materialism represents the philosophical basis of Marxism, *historical materialism represents its empirical or scientific basis*. In other words, dialectical materialism is the subject of philosophical speculation, but historical materialism is a subject of social and historical investigation, like an empirical science.

Empirical Science

Empirical science refers to an organized system of knowledge based on observation of facts through sense-experience (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch), and investigation of logical relationship between the observed facts.

At the outset, historical materialism implies that in any given epoch the economic relations of society — the means whereby men and women provide for their sustenance, produce, exchange, and distribute the things they regard necessary for the satisfaction of their needs — exert a preponderant influence in shaping the progress of society and in moulding social, political, intellectual, and ethical relationships. In other words, all types of social relations prevailing at any stage of historical development are determined by the economic conditions.

Marx's argument in this behalf begins with the simple truth that the survival of man depends upon his efficiency in the production of material things. Production is, therefore, the most important of all human activity. Society comes into existence primarily for the purpose of economic production because men in association produce more than men in isolation. A perfect society will secure all the necessities of life to the satisfaction of all its members. But according to the dialectic concept, perfection comes through a very long process of conflict between antagonistic elements. Society, since its inception, has always been subject to internal stresses and strains. Unsatisfied needs are, therefore, the result of the defective modes of production. But as man's knowledge of truth is also imperfect, he has always imagined another world where all his needs would be met. Thus religion comes into existence as 'the sob of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the spirit of conditions utterly unspiritual'. But, in reality, religion in no more than the shadow cast by a defective economic system which will disappear with the removal of those defects. *Marx dubbed religion 'the opium of the people'*, because when no one's needs are fully met in society, religion is the resort of all.

As the process of material production holds the key to man's social life, changes in this process are responsible for all historical development. Marx's description of historical development is based on the concept of historical materialism. As Marx himself observed: "In the social production of their life men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure, the real basis on which rises a legal and political superstructure" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*; 1859). According to this interpretation, the mode of production in a given society constitutes its 'base' (or 'substructure'); legal and political institutions, religion and morals, etc. constitute its 'superstructure' which are shaped according to the changing character of the base. What is the reason behind changes in the mode of production?

Marx's answer is: "at a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production ... within which they have been at work hitherto; from forms of development of the

productive forces these relations turn into their fetters ... Then begins an epoch of social revolution" (*ibid.*). To understand this process it is necessary to distinguish, at the outset, between 'forces of production' and 'relations of production'. Together they constitute the 'mode of production'. Forces of production comprise two elements: (*a*) Means of production (tools, machines, factories, and so on); and (*b*) Labour power (the skills, knowledge, experience and other human faculties used in the work). Relations of production are constituted by the pattern of economic ownership of the means of social production. *At every stage of historical development, owners of means of social production constitute the dominant class and those left with labour power only constitute the dependent class.*

Man's constant search for improvement of production (with a view to meeting his growing needs, and overcoming scarcity, etc.) requires the development of forces of production. This implies the improvement of means of production as well as the development of labour power. Means of production are improved by the scientific discoveries and invention of new techniques and implements while labour power is developed by the acquisition of new knowledge, education and training. The development of the forces of production leads to the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production. Intensification of this contradiction ushers in a stage when the existing relations of production are no longer compatible with the level of development of the forces of production. It results in the breakdown of the existing mode of production along with its superstructure. Thus, for example, with the rise of industrialization in the sphere of forces of production, the pre-existing feudal system in the sphere of relations of production (that is the division of society into lords and serfs) is bound to collapse which is now replaced by a new capitalist mode of production.

> (As per) 'historical materialism' ... at a certain state of their evolution the forces of production develop as far as they can under the existing economic and political organization of society, which then becomes a barrier to their further development, ushering in a period of social revolution.
>
> David McLellan ('Marxism' in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, edited by David Miller; 1987)

This process of historical development can also be explained by the dialectical method. According to the dialectical concept, the established order is a *thesis* which inevitably produces its own *antithesis* in the form of a new mode of production. In other words, as a result of some new invention or discovery, the productive forces come into conflict with the existing relations of production, particularly with the prevailing property system, which instead of furthering their development becomes the fetters upon it. As a result of the clash between the existing social relations and the new productive forces, a new revolutionary class emerges which overthrows the existing order in a violent revolution. The old order gives way to the new — slave society is replaced by feudal society; feudal society is replaced by capitalist society; capitalist society is replaced by socialist society. According to the dialectical logic, *every stage of social development which falls short of perfection contains the seeds of its own decay*. Marx saw his contemporary capitalist society as an imperfect stage

because it was marked by the division of society into antagonistic classes — the haves and have-nots, the *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat*, the dominant and dependent classes — and the consequent exploitation of the dependent class. It was, therefore, doomed due to an interplay of its inherent contradictions.

Lord and Serf

These were the two contending classes in medieval feudal society. Lord meant the landlord who was the owner of land. Serf meant the peasant who did not own land but cultivated it, and received a small, fixed share of the produce as a return for his toil. Serf was not a full-fledged slave. He could have his family and its belongings, but he could not leave his duty without permission of his lord. Exploitation of serfs was the distinctive feature of feudal society.

Bourgeoisie and Proletariat

These are the two contending classes in modern capitalist society. Engels' note to the English edition of the *Communist Manifesto* (1888) reads: "By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists; owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live."

Marx and Engels identified four main stages of past historical development: (*a*) Primitive communism in which universal labour is the chief source of production; the instruments of labour are slight and communally owned; (*b*) Ancient slave-owning society in which the means of production are owned by masters and labour for production is done by the slaves; (*c*) Medieval feudal society in which the means of production are owned by feudal lords and labour for production is done by the serfs; and (*d*) Modern capitalist society in which the means of production are owned by capitalists and labour for production is done by the proletariat — the propertyless workers. At each stage, society is divided into antagonistic classes; the class which owns the means of production and controls the forces of production, dominates the rest, thus perpetuating tension and conflict. At each stage of historical development, the forms or conditions of production determine the structure of society. Thus 'the handmill gives you society with the feudal lord, the steam mill society with the industrial capitalist'. The structure of society will in its turn breed attitudes, actions, and civilizations. Therefore 'all the social, political and intellectual relations, all religious and legal systems, all the theoretical outlooks which emerge in the course of history, are derived from the material conditions of life'.

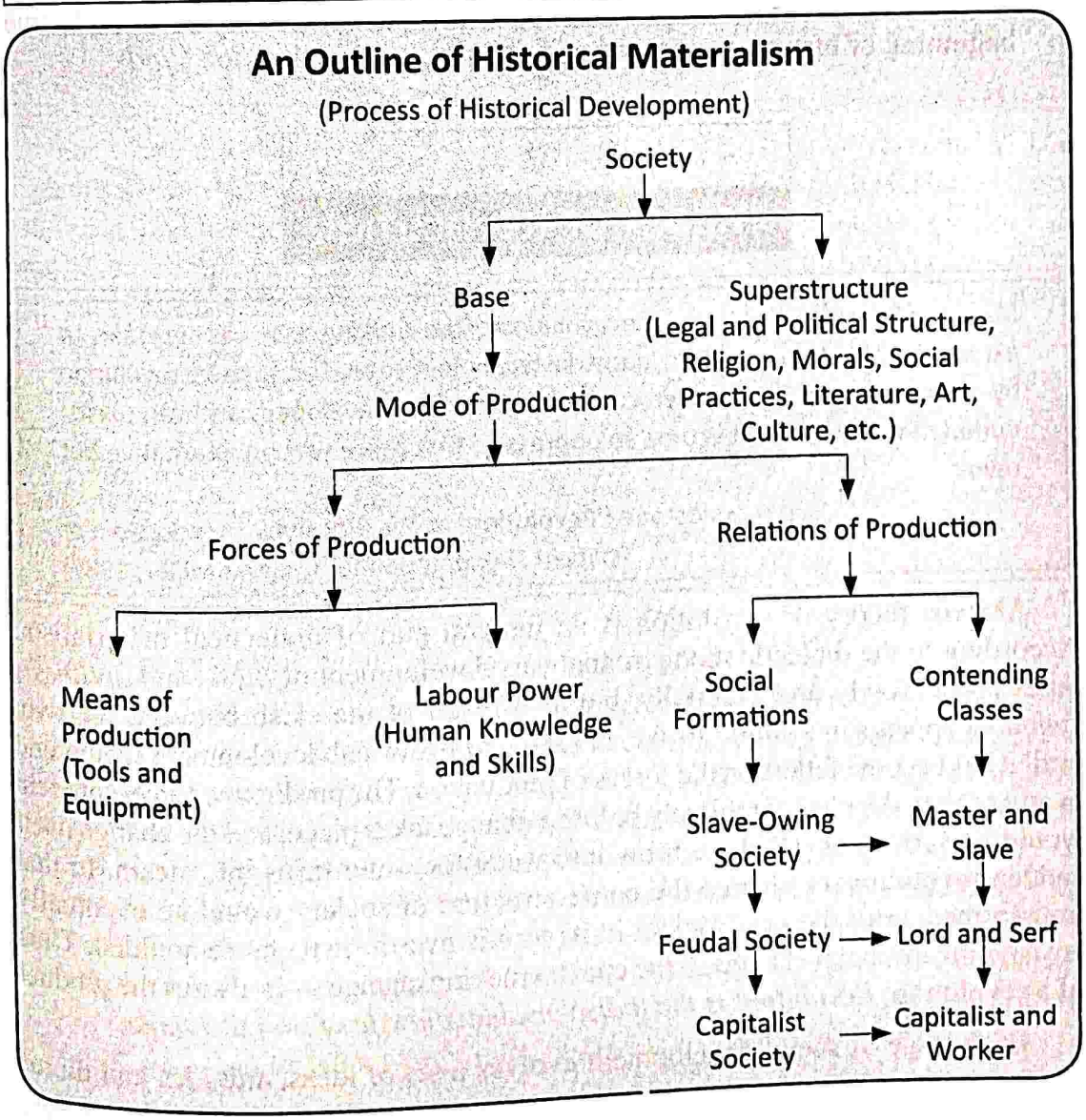
The forces of capitalism had heralded a new era of progress by destroying the feudal system. But Marx saw capitalism itself as a transitory phase. As George H. Sabine (*A History of Political Theory*; 1973 edition) has elaborated:

> The abolition of feudalism meant for Marx the rise to power of the middle class and the creation of a political system which made its power effective. In its

most developed form, as yet only partially reached, this system would be the democratic republic. The French Revolution, therefore, had been essentially a political revolution. It had transferred social dominance from the nobility and the clergy to the industrial and commercial middle class; it had created the state as a typical organ of middle class repression and exploitation; and its philosophy — the system of natural rights in politics and economics — was the ideal justification and rationalization of the middle class right to exploit the worker.

Thus class-conflict was inevitable during the capitalist stage of historical development, and another revolution was in store. Marx, therefore, anticipated a more profound revolution — the socialist revolution — by which the rising proletariat would displace the middle class from power as the middle class had displaced the older feudal class.

> The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.
>
> Karl Marx (*Theses on Feuerbach*; 1845)



Social Formation

In Marxist thought, social formation refers to a form of organization of society which comes into existence around a specific mode of production. Changes in mode of production give rise to different social formations which are associated with different historical epochs. Thus household-based small-scale production gives rise to slave-owning society; large-scale agriculture-based production gives rise to feudal society; and large-scale machine based production gives rise to capitalist society.

Marx believed that the socialist revolution would pave the way for the termination of the era of exploitation. As Sabine has further elucidated:

> The rising class, too, must have its philosophy, and as the philosophy of the middle class was in substance a claim to the natural rights of property, so a proletarian philosophy must be a socialist claim to the human rights of men without property. But just because the proletariat lay at the bottom of the social structure, with no class below it to be exploited, a proletarian revolution would not merely transfer the power to exploit but would abolish exploitation. It would be the first step to society without distinctions of social class and a true beginning of history as a record of full human self-realization (*ibid*).

V
THEORY OF REVOLUTION

Marx and Engels argued that... the revolution of the working class was necessary to extend the benefits of modern industrial technology to all. This socialist revolution by workers would occur when capitalism had fully developed, and capitalists' domination of workers become so oppressive that there was no alternative but revolt.

Jack A. Goldstone ('Revolution' in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, edited by David Miller; 1987)

Marxist theory of revolution is an integral part of dialectical materialism. According to the dialectic mode of analysis, development of *thesis* and *antithesis* takes place slowly and gradually, but as a result of the clash between the two, *synthesis* appears in a single stroke. No stage of historical development would end until it has become fetters on the forces of production. The productive forces inherent in any society develop completely before a change takes place, and the change itself would be sudden as when ice turns into water, or water turns into steam. In that sudden revolutionary change the entire structure of society would be eventually transformed, until the new society in its turn is overthrown and remoulded. Thus any significant social change — the epoch - making change — is always the product of a revolution. *Revolution is the indispensable midwife of social change.*

Each stage of social development evolves a set of ideas, attitudes and moral

values to sustain the existing pattern of social relationships. These ideas lend legitimacy to the system and constitute the dominant ideology. Moreover, the dominant class always has the vested interest in the existing system howsoever outmoded it may be. When the existing system is no longer capable of meeting the demands of the new productive forces, it would still resist any attempts to change it, so that the vested interests of the dominant class are not adversely affected. But the new productive forces must overcome all resistance and have their way. They must smash the existing economic substructure along with the entire superstructure in order to lay foundations of a new social-economic, legal-political order. The dominant class will not be prepared to part with its power until forced by the new revolutionary class to do so. *Revolution* is, therefore, *an essential concomitant of class conflict*. It is an essential condition of an effective transfer of power and the advent of a new epoch. In other words, social revolution is the necessary lever of social change.

Ideology

In Marxist theory, ideology refers to the set of ideas, beliefs and arguments which are used to lend legitimacy to the rule of the dominant class. It projects and promotes a value system under which even the exploitation of the dependent class seems justified.

Each new epoch of social history is, therefore, a product of revolution. The capitalist system was established by a revolutionary overthrow of the feudal system, as exemplified by the French Revolution (1789). But as the capitalist system had now become fetters on the new forces of production, this must be overthrown by the new revolutionary class — the proletariat — in a revolution. This would pave the way for transition from capitalism to socialism. Marx and Engels made it clear in the concluding part of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848): "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution." Marx and Engels also called for the development of a revolutionary class consciousness and a strong organization of the proletariat to fulfil their historic mission. *Although revolution was inevitable, yet a conscious effort on the part of the proletariat would accelerate the process leading to revolution.*

The proletarian revolution would be distinct from all previous revolutions of human history. A revolution in the past was accomplished by a small class, in its own interest, to establish its own supremacy and dominance, for the exploitation of another vulnerable class which came into existence with the introduction of the new mode of production. Thus the bourgeois revolution was made by a tiny bourgeois class which sought to establish the capitalist system for the exploitation of the proletariat. But the *proletarian revolution would be* different because it would be *a revolution of the majority against the minority, of the masses against the class of exploiters*. It is not designed to win power for a particular class for exploitation of any other class, but to put an end to the system of exploitation itself. This would

be the final revolution in history, to establish socialism in place of capitalism. This would abolish the institution of 'private property' by socialization of the means of production. This would establish a temporary 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in order to suppress a possible counter-revolution and to liquidate the remnants of capitalism. This would be a prelude to the emergence of communism. It was hoped that *under the loving care of the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism would blossom into communism.*

> Development towards communism proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise for the resistance of the capitalist exploiters cannot be broken by anyone else or in any other way.
>
> V.I. Lenin (*The State and Revolution*; 1917)

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

According to Marxism, 'dictatorship of the proletariat' refers to a form of organization of the State that comes into existence when organized working class overthrows capitalism and assumes full control of political power. Under this system, all means of social production are placed under State ownership and control, work is made compulsory for all able-bodied persons, and all counter-revolutionary forces are sought to be suppressed. The State undertakes *de novo* planning of material production so as to serve social needs, provide an effective right to work, education, health and housing for the masses, and further development of science and technology so as to multiply material production in order to achieve greater social satisfaction.

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, classes still exist with oppressive mechanism of the state. But this state is different from all previous states. It is not a state of property-holders for the oppression of the propertyless. On the contrary, it is a state of the propertyless for the liquidation of private property along with its ideology and culture. This state would undertake fullest development of the new productive forces — maximum technological development and gearing the productive process to meeting social needs instead of raising private profit — and pave the way for the evolution of a classless society, and for the 'withering away' of the state itself. *Communism will*, therefore, *blossom from the soil of socialism; no new revolution will be needed to bring about communism*. As Lenin, in his *State and Revolution* (1917), observed:

> Socialist society is still an imperfect society; it therefore retains the bourgeois right of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work'. But communism symbolized the perfect system of production with the highest development of the forces of production. It is therefore governed by the communistic principle: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'.

Communism

In Marxist terminology, communism refers to the final stage of social development which would emerge from the working of socialism for a long time. At this stage, means of social production remain under social ownership, labour remains universal — now on voluntary basis, the state 'withers away'; division of society into 'haves' and 'have-notes' disappears. It therefore exemplifies a classless and stateless society which would be able to fulfil all social needs. At this stage, rights are determined according to the rule: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need".

Some later Marxist writers, particularly Mao Zedong (1893-1976), argued that the class struggle does not end with the establishment of a communist state, but only takes new forms. Contradictions, which continue to persist even in a communist state — contradictions between progress and conservatism, between the advanced and the backward, between the positive and the negative, even between the productive forces and the conditions of production — must be fought perpetually in order to achieve the goal of communism. Revolution is, therefore, a perpetual and continuing process. This view is usually described as the *doctrine of permanent revolution.*

Distinction Between Socialism and Communism

The Issue	*Socialism*	*Communism*
Status of the Major Means of Production	Under Social Ownership	Under Common Ownership
Status of Labour	Compulsory for all able-bodied persons	All able-bodied persons voluntarily do labour
Status of the Polity	Dictatorship of the Proletariat	Classless, Stateless Society
Status of the Forces of Production	Heading toward Full Development	Fully Developed
Status of the Rights	From each according to his ability, to each according to his work	From each according to his ability, to each according to his need

(*N.B.* In common parlance, 'socialist system' and 'communist system' are used as coterminous.)

The scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the 'first', or lower phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word 'communism' is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is not complete communism.

V.I. Lennin (*The State and Revolution*; 1917)

VI
DOCTRINE OF CLASS CONFLICT

Class conflict or class struggle—which *represents the sociological basis of Marxism* — is an integral part of historical materialism. The opening sentence of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) reads:

> The history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggles.

Here, history means all *written* history. When the *Communist Manifesto* was originally written, the pre-history giving account of primitive tribal communities with common ownership of the means of social production was not known. When it became known, it was described as 'primitive communism'. *Communist Manifesto* deals with the period beginning with the division of society into antagonistic classes since the emergence of private property. So the *Communist Manifesto* proceeds:

> Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

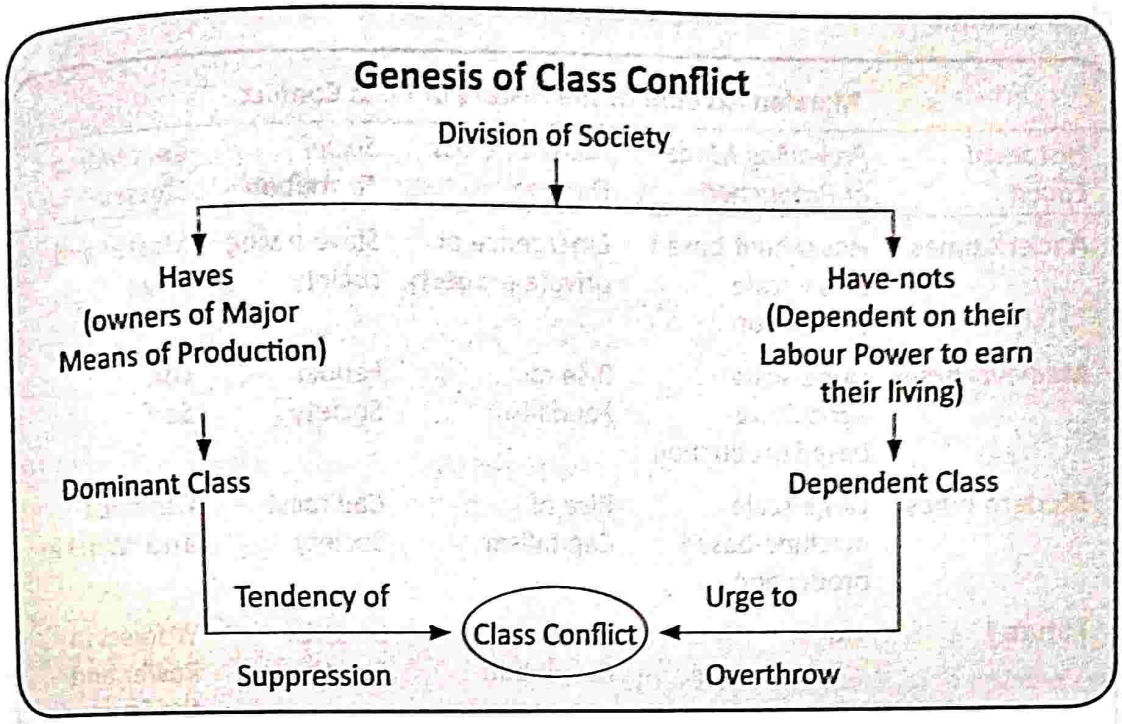
Primitive Communism

Primitive communism refers to a form of communism (a classless society with common ownership of the means of social production) found in primitive societies. At this stage, the instruments of labour were of most primitive kind — the club, the stone axe, the flint knife, the stone-tipped spear, followed later by the bow and arrow: Man's muscular strength was the only motive force employed to operate these elementary tools. These tools were held in common ownership by the members of the primitive community which engaged itself in common labour, *e.g.* common hunting, common fishing, and the fruits of this common labour were also shared in common. There was no concept of private property, hence no exploitation of man by man.

With the development of the forces of production, one mode of production is replaced by another, but class conflict (between the new social classes) reappears under the new social formation. Thus ancient slave-owning society was characterized by the class conflict between master and slave; medieval feudal society, by the class conflict between lord and serf; and the modern capitalist society, by the class conflict between bourgeoisie (capitalists) and proletariat (workers).

Status of the class conflict in modern capitalist society is described in the *Communist Manifesto* as under:

> The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.



Class conflict in modern capitalist society has appeared in more crystallized form. So the *Communist Manifesto* declares:

> Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two real hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Marx and Engels hoped that this conflict had entered a decisive phase. They had full faith in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, *i.e.* their ability to overthrow capitalism and establish a socialist society with social ownership of means of social production. So they observed:

> Of all the classes that stand face to face with bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product (*ibid*).

The proletarian revolution would be different from all previous revolutions of history:

> All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority (*ibid*).

According to Marx and Engels, this revolution would bring about the final emancipation of mankind because there is no class below the proletariat which could be subjected to exploitation when the proletariat comes to power. It would place all means of social production under social ownership, make work compulsory for everyone, and develop the forces of production to their full potential. This will pave the way for the emergence of a classless society which will mark the end of

class conflict.

Marxian Account of the History of Class Conflict

Historical Epoch	*Prevailing Mode of Production*	*Cause of Class Division*	*Social Formation*	*Contending Classes*
Ancient times	Household-based small-scale production	Emergence of private property	Slave-owing society	Master and Slave
Medieval times	Large-scale agriculture-based production	Rise of Feudalism	Feudal Society	Lord and Serf
Modern times	Large-scale machine-based production	Rise of Capitalism	Capitalist Society	Capitalist and Worker
Future-I	-do-	Socialist Revolution	Socialist Society	Workers in Power and the Former Capitalists
Future-II	-do-	No Class Division	Communist Society	No Contending Classes

VII
CONCEPT OF SURPLUS VALUE

The idea of surplus value represents the economic basis of Marxism. According to Marxist theory, capitalist mode of production involves exploitation of the working class. The principle of surplus value illustrates how this exploitation takes place. *According to Marx, labour is the sole creator of value.* Of the four elements of production — land, labour, capital and organization — three elements, *viz.* land, capital and organization, are sterile because they are capable of reproducing only what is put in them. They are, therefore, no source of value. Labour is the only variable element which produces value in society. In his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx observed:

> The common social substance of the commodities is labour... A commodity has a value because it is crystallization of social labour. The greatness of its value or its relative value depends upon the greater or lesser amount of that social substance contained in it, that is to say, on the relative mass of labour necessary for its production. The relative values of commodities are, therefore, determined by the respective quantities or amounts of labour worked up, realized, fixed in them.

The amount of labour embodied in a commodity should be calculated right from the beginning — the labour employed in producing the raw material, in processing the raw material, in mobilizing the sources of energy used (*e.g.* coal and

oil) and in constructing the machinery and building, etc. In saying that the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of labour employed, we must take into account the quantity of labour required for its production in a given state of society, under certain average conditions of social production, and average skill of the labour employed.

Here it is essential to distinguish between value and price of a commodity. Price is only a monetary expression of value. If the price of a commodity corresponds to its value in monetary terms, it may be described as the *natural price*. But, besides the natural price of a commodity, there is the *market price* which fluctuates heavily depending upon the conditions of demand and supply. The market price is, therefore, sometimes much higher than the natural price of a commodity; sometimes much lower. Under the conditions of a free market economy fostered by the capitalist system, the worker is forced to sell his labour in the open market at the market price. Now, the market price of labour is not determined by its potential value which would be added to the value of the commodity produced by it, but by the value of necessities required for the worker's own maintenance and for the maintenance of his family so that he could bring up his children to replace him on the labour market in the future, in order to sustain the capitalist system itself.

Labour is the only element of production which produces surplus value. In other words, labour is capable of producing much more than what is required to maintain, develop and perpetuate it. Suppose a worker is required to work at an average of thirty hours a week to match the value of the necessities required to maintain him and his family. If he works only to this extent, he does not produce surplus value. But, under the capitalist system, a wage-labourer is forced to sell his labour power to the capitalist where its market price is determined by the law of demand and supply. With the increased availability of the labour force, the market price of labour declines. The capitalist forces the worker to labour to his maximum capacity while he pays him only 'subsistence wages' at the market rate. In this way, the labourer gets back only a part of the value that he produces, in the shape of his wages.

Subsistence Wages

Subsistence wages refer to the wages paid to the worker to meet the requirements of mere survival of himself and his family.

The value produced by the labour may be divided into two parts: one part comprises that value which is paid to the worker as wages; the other part comprises the value of surplus labour done by him which is not paid to the worker but which swells the pockets of the capitalist and constitutes his profit. Rent and interest are paid out of this surplus value. If the capitalist employs his own capital, land and building, etc. the entire surplus value would go into his pocket; otherwise he will only get the industrial or commercial profit, and some part of the surplus value will be passed on to third parties. In any case, land, capital or organization does not produce any value; the value of these elements is derived from the surplus value produced by the labour. With the overthrow of capitalism and socialization of the means of production under the socialist system, the exploitation of surplus value

will be eliminated; full value of labour would be paid to the worker or some part of it would be diverted to the provision of common services which will again benefit the worker. Only the worker who produces value will be entitled to maintenance; social parasites would no more be tolerated: 'He who does not work, neither shall eat.'

> These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalistic production through surplus value, we owe to Marx. With these discoveries socialism became a science.
>
> Friedrich Engels (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*; 1892)

VIII
NEO-MARXISM

Contemporary debates on Marxism focus on the relative importance of its basic tenets and the identification of some new forms of domination and conflict emerging in the present-day society. It is no longer believed that the superstructure is wholly dependent on the base. Recognition of some new aspects of the relation between base and superstructure has led to extensive analysis of various features of the superstructure.

The ongoing controversies in the arena of Marxist thought largely owe their origin to the work of the Frankfurt School. This school was originally set up in 1923 as the Institute of Social Research in the University of Frankfurt, exiled from Germany in 1933 consequent upon the rise of Hitler, relocated in the United States shortly thereafter, and after the downfall of Hitler it was reestablished in Frankfurt in the early 1950s. Scholars of this institute were hostile to capitalism; they were also disillusioned with Soviet socialism. They sought to evolve an alternative path for social development in accordance with the essence of Marxism as understood by them. The ideas evolved by the Frankfurt School are compendiously described as '*critical theory*', although they do not fit into a single framework. The general outlook of the exponents of critical theory has been described by David Held as follows: "They tried to develop a critical perspective in the discussion of all social practices, that is a perspective which is preoccupied by the critique of ideology—of systematically distorted accounts of reality which attempt to conceal and legitimate asymmetrical power relations. They were concerned with the way in which social interests, conflicts and contradictions are expressed in thought, and how they are produced and reproduced in systems of domination. Through an examination of these systems they hoped to enhance awareness of the roots of domination, undermine ideologies and help to compel changes in consciousness and action." (*A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by Tom Bottomore; 1983).

The exponents of critical theory advanced new interpretations of Marxism in several directions and various spheres of learning, including those of philosophy, economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, psycho-analysis, music and fine arts, etc. The leading figures of the Frankfurt School

Theodor Adorno (1903-69), Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) and Jurgen Habermas (1929-), among others, advanced a cultural critique of bourgeois society—particularly in terms of 'technological domination' rather than capitalist domination.

Broadly speaking, contemporary Marxist thought—better known as neo-Marxism—has developed in two directions: humanist and scientific. The humanist strain of neo-Marxism draws particularly on the work of the Young Marx and constitutes the mainstream of critical theory. Its dominant themes are the problems of alienation and ways to human emancipation. Thus Herbert Marcuse has brilliantly portrayed the conditions of alienation in bourgeois society which have reduced the human being to 'one-dimensional man'. He has stated that capitalism has cunningly anaesthetized the discontent of the oppressed by manipulating the means of communication so as to stimulate trivial, material desires which are easily satisfied. Marcuse has argued that human beings should first be made aware of their condition of unfreedom whereafter they will easily find their way to freedom. On the other hand, the scientific strain of neo-Marxism is primarily concerned with its scientific and explanatory character. It is particularly interested in structures as well as relative importance of cultural, ideological and social factors. Thus Louis Althusser (1918-90), French communist and philosopher, challenged the humanist themes of Marxist thinking in the early 1960s, and asserted the importance of analysing the deep structures of human societies—especially their modes of production.

IX
A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Marxism arose at a critical juncture when liberal theory of 'free market society' had entered a decadent phase; when masses were being exploited by a tiny capitalist class. The great ideals of 'liberty, equality, fraternity' enunciated by the makers of the French Revolution (1789) were reduced to negative rights of man, that is the 'right to be left alone' in a competitive setting. This situation had led to the deplorable condition of the working class. Some humanitarian thinkers and reformers were, of course, preaching the gospel of socialism to improve the lot of the working classes, but they had not yet found any scientific way to realize their dreams or to achieve their humanistic goals. At this stage, Marx and Engels discovered the scientific basis of their theory of transition to socialism, and exhorted the working class to understand and assume their historical role in the process. It was *Marxism* which *appeared as a liberating force for the oppressed people of the world.* It inspired the great Bolshevik Revolution (1917) in Russia and Communist Revolution (1949) in China. Eventually some other countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America adopted socialist systems inspired by the Marxist philosophy.

The advent of socialist system in many backward countries initially played an important role in reconstruction of economy and fulfilment of material needs of people. However, they failed to achieve further progress as their leadership was not prepared tc part with its power and privileges in the interests of the people.

In the name of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', the system was reduced to mere dictatorship; people were denied democratic rights and civil liberties. Full employment was granted, but full material production to fulfil people's needs could not be secured. Government monopoly over mass media led to the suppression of truth, and people lost faith in their sources of information. Scarcity of essential goods and services led to bureaucratic bungling and corruption. Widespread protests and resistance led to the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe by the end of 1980s, and its collapse in the former Soviet Union by 1991.

The collapse of socialism in its citadel was followed by the introduction of market economies and multiparty political systems, which necessitated new thinking on the adequacy of classical Marxism on which these regimes were based. Moreover, in the People's Republic of China and other countries which still claim to retain their communist systems, necessary changes are being made toward liberalization in keeping with their national needs and aspirations. China has particularly switched over to what is called 'market socialism'. Now there is no scope of observing rigidity in maintaining communist systems as it was done during the regimes of Stalin (1879-1953) in Russia and Mao Zedong (1893-1976) in China. Experience has shown that instead of 'withering away of the state' in socialist countries, there has been a collapse of socialist state and consequent return toward liberalism. Champions of classical Marxism try to explain away this situation by alleging that these countries were not really socialist at all!

Liberalization

Liberalization refers to the policy of removal or relaxation of government control or restriction on economic activity with a view to maximizing its efficiency. It seeks to reduce the state's liability toward welfare of the individuals and promote incentive-based rewards rather than dependence on various subsidies.

Market Socialism

Market socialism refers to an economic system where means of social production are held in public ownership, but allocation of resources is made according to market principles. Thus product market, labour market and capital market come into existence along with the socialist system.

This is, however, an oversimplification of the issue. It is now becoming increasingly clear that the problem of fighting out the forces of domination and exploitation is no longer confined to the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class, as originally envisaged in late nineteenth century. Upholders of the 'dependency theory' have been arguing that in late twentieth century the focus of struggle has shifted to the fight of the developing nations against the forces of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Other neo-Marxists have amply demonstrated that domination and exploitation in human society assume many complex forms. The framework of Marxism must be modified suitably to tackle all these problems in the contemporary context.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory refers to the theory that the continued impoverishment of the underdeveloped countries is not generated by their internal conditions like the lack of drive, entrepreneurial spirit, creativity or problem-solving ability. In fact, it is the consequence of their colonial exploitation in the past and their linkage with the global capitalism in the present, which prevent them from independent development. To overcome this problem they must adopt Western technology but exert their independence in the field of international relations and international trade.

André Gunder Frank (1929-2005), German-American economic historian, and Samir Amin (1931-2018), African writer, are the chief exponents of dependency theory.

Colonialism

Colonialism refers to the practice under which a nation-state, after consolidating its national power, extends its domination over territories of other countries for exploiting their natural and human resources. The colonial power establishes its own administration in the subject country and takes all resources thereof under its own control.

Neo-Colonialism

Neo-colonialism refers to the practice under which an advanced nation does not maintain its political domination in a foreign territory, but taking advantage of its superior position in the organization of trade and industry, uses the resources of a developing nation as a source of cheap labour and raw materials as well as a big market of its own products. It is a subtle method of economic exploitation of developing nations by the developed nations.

It should be remembered that *Marx and Engels were basically great humanists who believed in the process of a constant debate to find the truth.* Unfortunately, some of their followers have reduced Marxism to a rigid ideology which claims that it has 'found the truth'. It is a dangerous claim. Search for truth is a constant process. It must go on till humanity survives. If somebody claims that he has found the truth, the next step would be to apply it ruthlessly by suppressing everybody's freedom. Marx and Engels projected an image of the future when class distinctions will be totally eliminated; when people will voluntarily give their best to society; when everybody's material needs would be fulfilled; when administration would be carried on without the oppressive machinery of the state. The *Communist Manifesto* projects the future as follows: "In place of the old bourgeoisie society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which *the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."* How can

we reconcile this ideal with a regime that believes in the suppression of freedom of people?

The situation becomes more dangerous when some militant organizations claiming to be the followers of Marxism resort to indiscriminate killings and other terrorist activities in the name of 'class struggle'! Marx and Engels had only envisaged mass uprising against a handful of exploiters, and not the method of jeopardizing the safety of the innocent people. While the real message of Marxism still continues to be relevant, its distortion is very injurious to humanity which must be curbed resolutely.

In any case, the contribution of Neo-Marxism to contemporary political thought deserves more attention of the intellectuals as well as statesmen of the world. For instance, the humanist stream of Neo-Marxism shows the way to secure human freedom by detecting and smashing various subtle structures of domination in society. On the other hand, the scientific stream of Neo-Marxism shows the way to social transformation in order to secure social justice. For example, it suggests that any social revolution could be started either in the Base or any part of the Superstructure, such as law, polity, education, literature, folklore, art forms, religious precepts, etc. It would eventually percolate to the whole set of Base-Superstructure complex.

Q. 1. "Dialectical materialism represents the philosophical basis of Marxism whereas historical materialism represents its empirical basis." Elucidate and comment.

2. "Class conflict represents the sociological foundation of Marxism; concept of surplus value represents its economic foundation." Elucidate and comment.

3. Write short, critical notes on : (*a*) Development of Marxism ; and (*b*) Marxism as a theory of revolution.

4. What is Neo-Marxism? Does it mark a departure from the mainstream Marxism?

16

Gender Perspective

> Among the rude people, the women are generally degraded; among civilized people, they are exalted.
>
> James Mill (1773-1836)

I
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

DISTINCTION BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

In social and political philosophy, gender perspective is primarily concerned with the extent of differential treatment of men and women in society. In order to understand full implications of this perspective, it is necessary to inquire into the causes and remedy of discrimination against women. In social sciences and literary criticism, the term 'gender' is largely used to indicate the differences in social status of man and woman, particularly to refer to the fact that women are placed in a lower position in relation to their intrinsic worth. Our concern with the gender perspective insists on right ordering of status of women in relation to men in social and political life.

> If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?
>
> Mary Astell (1706)

> If a test of civilization be sought, none can be so sure as the condition of the half of society over which the other half has power — from the exercises of the right of the strongest.
>
> Harriet Martineau (1837)

It order to realize the significance of gender perspective, it would be initially necessary to understand the distinction between sex and gender. When we use the

term 'sex', its scope is limited to biological differences between male and female as manifested in reproductive function and secondary characteristics, such as body hair and breast development. On the other hand, the term 'gender' is largely used in the sociological context where it refers to cultural ideas that give rise to different expectations from males and females. Nature has divided human race between men and women, but their status and role in society are determined by our culture. When we speak of women as 'fair sex' or 'weaker sex' or when we invoke the etiquette of 'ladies first', our attention is not confined to the biological fact, but we have already entered the realm of culture.

Culture

Culture refers to the set of values, beliefs, symbols, modes of thought and behaviour, styles of living, art and craft as well as the various skills evolved by the members of a community in order to streamline its social life. These factors contribute to the establishment of a distinctive identity of the community in question.

Culture usually refers to certain distinctive features of different communities. However, some typical attitudes towards gender can be found throughout the civilized world. These attitudes tend to divide male and female personality traits and behavioural tendencies into two opposite patterns. These patterns may be described as *masculinity* and *femininity* respectively. Masculinity, for example, typically includes aggressiveness, logical outlook, control of emotional expression, and attitude of dominance, while femininity is associated with peacefulness, intuitiveness, emotional expressiveness, and submissiveness. Some variations in these characteristics are possible in different social contexts. For example, a wife may be relatively submissive to her husband, but as a mother she may not be so towards her children. Moreover, the degree of submissiveness of a woman may vary from one case to another.

In any case, *relative dominance of man and relative submissiveness of woman represent almost universal cultural traits, which are not directly based on their biological differences*. Broadly speaking, these are the products of the social organization based on patriarchy and its institutions, the division of labour in the family and the competitive and exploitative character of the economic system. From this perspective, the concepts of masculinity and femininity serve as instruments of social control that reinforce male dominance. So if a woman tends to behave in an authoritarian manner, particularly towards men, her behaviour is termed to be indecent. In short, the expectations attached to differential roles of men and women serve as the foundation of gender inequality in society.

Patriarchy

It literally means 'rule of the father'. Originally this term was used to describe a social system based on the authority of male head of the household. Now it is applied to denote male domination in general, including its occurrence in labour market as well as domestic division of labour.

> The dogma of woman's complete historical subjection to men must be rated as one of the most fantastic myths ever created in the human mind.
>
> Mary R. Beard (1946)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), French philosopher, in his essay *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755), had distinguished between natural inequality and conventional inequality. Natural inequality describes the inequality of age, health. beauty. physical and intellectual capacities of different people, which were created by nature. These inequalities are largely unalterable. On the other hand, conventional inequalities represent disparities of wealth, prestige and power among different individuals. These inequalities are the product of our social arrangements. We can undertake a critical examination of these inequalities from the point of view of justice, and can reduce them by altering our social arrangements. In other words, conventional inequalities are alterable. In the present context, the division of society into two sexes—male and female—represents natural inequality, while gender inequalities are the product of convention and culture. These inequalities can be questioned and removed wherever they are found objectionable. So the issues relating to sex and gender may briefly be shown by the following chart:

Issues Relating to Sex and Gender

The Issue	Division of Society into	Men and Women
Point of Division	Sex	Gender
Basis of Division	Product of Nature	Product of Culture
Symptom of Division	Natural Inequality	Conventional Inequality
Character of Division	Unalterable	Alterable

Recent thinking on the subject has led to a voice of protest against gender-based discrimination, accompanied by the commitment to improve the position of women in society. It seeks restoration of justice for women who remained deprived of equal status and opportunities vis-à-vis men since earliest times. Their condition in the present-day society is reflected in the following report :

> Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property *(United Nations Report,* 1980).
> The condition remains more or less unchanged today.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Report (1997), globally rural women are solely responsible for half of the world's food production; and in developing countries, as much as 80 % of food crops. More recent estimates (2009) claim that half of the world's food, and in developing countries between 60-80 % of food crops, are grown from the seeds that have been planted by a woman's hand. In contrast to women's sizable contribution to production from land, their right to ownership of land is extremely restricted. As pointed out in a recent report of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization Report (2010): "Gender inequalities in land rights are pervasive... Women hold these

rights through male family members. Women thus risk losing entitlements in case of divorce, widowhood or their husband's migration. Evidence also shows that women's land parcels are generally of smaller size and lower quality than men's." All these data testify to the widespread discrimination against women all over the world.

THE CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

It has now been proved beyond doubt that biological differences between man and woman do not justify inferior status of women. On the contrary, cultural factors have contributed to accentuate even the biological differences between men and women. The rapid improvement in women's athletic records in recent decades is an indication that social norms had shaped biology and restricted women's physical development. Feminist anthropologists have pointed out that in some ethnic groups physical differentiation between men and women is not as prominent as in others. On the whole, the present status of women is chiefly the product of social arrangements. Women often spend most of their time in domestic work and in rearing children. Most women do not get an opportunity to develop their own personality. They are made to believe that the proper sphere of their activity is within their household and that they need not take interest in public life. From the beginning, girls are taught to pay more attention to personal relations, not to personal success. Boys are taught to be firm, assertive and aggressive; girls are taught to be obedient, shy and submissive. Boys are encouraged to become doctors, engineers and lawyers; girls are encouraged to become school teachers, nurses or secretaries. The experience gained by women in their own professional life does not help them to take up a political career.

In the light of the growing social consciousness against various forms of injustice in society, the position with regard to the status of women needs to be reviewed, challenged and changed. Indeed, feminist theory and movement urge that women's situation and the inequalities between men and women should be treated as central political issues. All streams of feminist thought focus on the causes and remedies of women's inequality, subordination or oppression.

Feminism

Feminism refers to a social movement which aims at the removal of discrimination against women in terms of their rights, opportunities for self-development and share in political power. The philosophy behind this movement is also called feminism.

Feminist theory inquires into the causes of suffering and deprivation of women, and attempts to suggest measures for restoring their due share in prestige, power and wealth of society.

If injustice against women has existed since earliest times, why has it come to the forefront only in recent times? It may be recalled that at the early stages of social organization, biological differences between men and women necessitated certain division of labour between them. Men who were physically strong and stable chose to go out for hunting and other hazardous jobs. Women who were not so fit

for hazardous jobs, and who were also constrained to undertake child-bearing and child-rearing, chose to remain at home and perform household jobs. The system was based on mutual care and adjustment, and did not involve any significant level of resentment.

With the development of technology, sweeping changes took place in other parts of social organization, but the prevailing division of labour between men and women remained more or less unchanged. With the evolution of various forms of power, man as head of the family, of the clan, and of the tribe acquired more and more power but woman largely continued to hold the subordinate position. Woman was given some concessions and exemptions from strenuous and hazardous tasks as she was regarded the 'weaker sex'. As she was sexually (and also perhaps emotionally) vulnerable, she was not allowed to mix with strangers. Shyness was eulogized as a woman's ornament. She was encouraged to decorate herself and her beauty was admired in poetry, music, paintings and other works of art. In civilized society, she was recognized as the 'fair sex', endowed with special dignity. Manners like 'ladies first' were evolved to confirm that dignity. Helping 'a damsel in distress' was admired as an act of chivalry among men. However, *in spite of so much importance accorded to woman in social life, she was systematically deprived of her share in power*. She was given security but not an opportunity to learn certain things that would make her as competent as man, and thereby vindicate her claim to equality. In particular, she was deprived of the right to ownership of property, right to vote and opportunities of education and higher learning even though these deprivations had no logical connection with her biological status as a woman. Early voices demanding rights of women particularly focused on these issues.

> Frailty, thy name is woman!
>
> William Shakespeare (*Hamlet*; 1601)

When Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) published her essay *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), woman was not only restrained from voting, but was deemed unfit for education, was debarred from many occupations, and had no legal right to own property. She had no real right to divorce even if her husband abused her. Wollstonecraft forcefully challenged the prevailing belief in female inferiority and demanded equal rights for women. She argued that women, like men, are rational individuals and should have equal rights. She established the principles on which campaigns for women's right to education, employment, property and the vote were later built up. John Stuart Mill (1806-73), in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), sought to demonstrate that women were in no way inferior to men in their talents, and pleaded to give them full legal and political rights.

> There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect law-makers.
>
> Susan B. Anthony (1897)

In the nineteenth century, feminist theory largely focused on removing educational and professional barriers from woman's life. The reforming spirit behind

these campaigns was often quite militant which culminated in early twentieth-century struggles for women's suffrage. More recent demands of this movement in the Western world focused on women's employment rights, equal pay for equal work, and equality in social benefits, taxation and so on.

In the contemporary world, further advancement in technology, diversification of business, industry, administration, arts and professions, etc. and the increasing demand of new skills, talents, and professional competence, have given women the opportunity of proving their abilities. They have also been encouraged to acquire higher qualifications and training and to seek respectable careers. It is now widely realized that women are fit to perform most of the jobs that men do, and for which they were not considered fit earlier. Equal rights for women are no longer questioned in enlightened circles.

II
SPHERES OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Women are the victims of discrimination in several spheres of social life. Broadly speaking, they suffer injustice in the following spheres for which suitable measures of redressal must be taken: (*a*) Political Sphere; (*b*) Economic Sphere; and (*c*) Cultural Sphere.

POLITICAL SPHERE

Feminists argue that our society largely discriminates between men and women in the matter of allocation of benefits and burdens. Society has failed to appreciate the full range of contributions made by women for its sustenance, not to speak of giving adequate reward for these contributions. On the other hand, society has also failed to realize the extraordinary constraints under which women work, not to speak of removing these constraints.

Coming to the political sphere, it may be noted at the outset that the advanced nations of Western Europe and North America withheld women's right to vote for a very long time. It was introduced in the United States as late as 1920; in France, it was granted in 1947; and in Switzerland, it was extended to all territories in 1971. Apart from their fight for suffrage, women in Western countries had to launch separate struggles for securing rights connected with citizenship. These included: to pass their citizenship to their children; to retain their citizenship on marriage on the basis of their own nationality (instead of their husbands' nationality); to contend for political office and to hold it; and the right to serve on juries. Now they have won their political rights in all the advanced industrial nations but their actual share in political power is far behind that of men. For instance, nine decades after the women won the right-to-vote in the United States, their share in the House of Representatives is less than 20 per cent; in the Senate, it is less than 10 per cent. No woman became American President so far. In 2021, America had its first woman Vice-President.

Many reasons are advanced to explain this situation. It is now ruled out

that the gross under-representation of women at the positions of political power is the outcome of their own choice. One tangible reason of this situation is that the vast majority of successful candidates come from a handful of *elite* professions, such as law which require high levels of education, but women get fewer opportunities for higher education. A record of military service or high standing in business also proves a stepping stone to political office. Women lag far behind in this area also. Besides, electoral victory requires large-scale mobilization of funds; party workers are less willing to mobilize such funds for women candidates.

Even where women are elected, they are excluded from responsible positions because of a preconceived notion that they cannot take a tough stand on important issues. It is also believed that women with small children might be constrained to be absent on some important occasions. The position can be changed if the responsibility of bringing up children is equally shared by mother and father, at least in the cases where mother is equally competent. Moreover, experience has shown that women in high positions can also take bold decisions and firm stand at the time of crisis. The political tenure of Indira Gandhi (1917-84), former Prime Minister of India, is the case in point.

Feminists have also identified some typical problems concerning women which prevent them from taking up political career. It is generally observed that women are particularly conscious of their bodily appearance and self-presentation as if beauty is the measure of their success in social life. It is believed that a woman's looks and figure constitute much of her fortune. Again, women are vulnerable to sexual harassment and various kinds of violence including domestic violence, apart from molestation on streets, offices and public places. It is alleged that a woman's vulnerability is directly proportional to her beauty and attractive makeup! Preoccupation with personal care and decoration sometimes prevents a women from thinking of taking up a political career.

Adequate provision of safety, educational and career development opportunities and professional training for women would go a long way in ameliorating the lot of women. This can be secured more effectively if women themselves come forward in the field of active politics. It would not be correct to say that there are no women activists. However, a large number of women activists are devoted to community work at grassroot level. According to Martha Ackelsberg ('Communities, resistance and women's activism' in *Women and the Politics of Empowerment,* edited by Ann Brookman and Sandra Morgen; 1988), women have been "leaders and activists in 'bread riots' and tenant organizations... participated in factory-based strikes that engendered, and depended on, community support...they have led struggles for new and better schools." Again, women have also been leaders in the struggles for environmental justice. In India, women living on mountains particularly played active role in *'chipko* movement' (They hugged the trees to stop their felling). They also lodged strong protests against the displacement of tribals due to construction of dams, particularly against Narmada dam. Then women have also led struggles against rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, etc. all over the world. In short,

women activists have largely fought for welfare of women and the society at large, but they have scarcely focused on their own political career.

> Woman is shut up in a kitchen or in a boudoir, and astonishment is expressed that her horizon is limited. Her wings are clipped, and it is found deplorable that she cannot fly.
>
> Simone de Beauvoir (1908-86)
>
> (*Boudoir = a woman's bedroom or private sitting room*)

ECONOMIC SPHERE

Feminists argue that women's contribution to economic life has been largely ignored; hence they have been denied befitting benefits in this sphere. The system of national income accounting ignores the unpaid work done by women for the benefit of family and community. Many feminists argue that most women not only do a lot of domestic work, their services towards child-bearing and child-rearing, etc. constitute 'real work'; they not only consume the worker's time and energy but also involve various skills including some sophisticated skills like cooking, house-keeping, sewing, weaving, embroidery, etc. apart from the operation of domestic appliances. Market value of these services is seldom taken into account. Even working women who make a substantial contribution to family income have to perform most of these jobs for which they seldom get credit, not to speak of any special reward.

Feminists further argue that women's larger contribution to well-being of men and other members of the family could be justified if it is made voluntarily. But, in fact, it is necessitated by the social conditions where women's occupational choices are constrained by institutional factors, such as employment opportunities and cultural norms which impose larger burden on women. The services rendered by women provide more time and energy for men who are thus enabled to make a significant contribution to society. Thus, women's extra labour benefits not only their men and their families, it also benefits the larger society. Unfortunately, the women doing a huge amount of 'unpaid work' are stigmatized as 'dependent' on men. It is a striking example of 'unjust' distribution of benefits and burdens in society.

CULTURAL SPHERE

Women are also victims of discrimination in cultural sphere. Many common social practices reflect a cultural climate of masculine dominance in which women regularly experience shame, embarrassment and vulnerability. In professional life, men look for excuses to touch the bodies of their women colleagues, and to address them in apparently affectionate but actually mischievous ways. Most of the jokes cracked by men ridicule or sexualize women. In Indian languages, most of the abuses involve insult to women—the mother, the sister and the daughter. Women's attractive looks and voice are widely used in advertising which tend to prejudice their dignity. Women's reputation is regarded to be so delicate that many of the cases of molestation and outraging of modesty of

women go unreported due to fear of shame.

In the Indian tradition, some saints have deprecated the company of women as the door to hell. In Indian mythology, women have been treated as an object of donation. Many 'great men' sought to save their glory by gifting their wives to strangers. When several contenders stake their claims for marrying the same girl, decision is taken by an authority on the basis of certain quasi-logical 'conventions'; choice of the girl herself is seldom invoked.

Among Hindus, cremation ceremony of the dead body of a person is to be performed by his son, which is believed to ensure the dead person's entry into heaven. It is presumed that if the dead person had only daughters and no son, he would not be entitled to a place in heaven. Experience has shown that our beliefs about other-worldly matters are derived from our understanding of wordly matters. In modern times, when girls have proved their talents in all important fields, exaltation of son to the detriment of daughter will have to be abandoned, like so many other superstitions.

In a nutshell, justice for women must be secured in all spheres—political, economic as well as cultural. Without securing substantive justice for women, no society can claim to have established a just social order.

III
BROAD STREAMS OF FEMINISM

Feminist theory has evolved into various schools of thought. Of these three are particularly important: (*a*) Liberal feminism, (*b*) Radical feminism, and (*c*) Socialist feminism.

LIBERAL FEMINISM

> I recognize no rights but human rights— I know nothing of men's rights and women's rights.
>
> Angelina Grimké (1836)

Liberal feminism represents the earliest trend in feminist thought. It seeks amelioration in the condition of women in pursuance of the policy of liberalism. It advocates suitable reforms in the liberal institutions already existing in Western countries. It opposes any revolutionary change. Mary Wollstonecraft, the early exponent of liberal feminism, sought to establish fundamental equality between men and women within the existing framework of liberal democracy. She argued that both man and woman are essentially rational creatures. But women were deprived of education as well as opportunity to participate in public life. Under the circumstances, woman was cast in the image of an emotional and playful creature rather than a rational creature.

Liberalism

Liberalism refers to a principle of politics which regards 'liberty' or freedom' of individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. Its main tenets are: (*a*) Man is a rational being and the best judge of his self-interest; (*b*) Common interest represents the aggregate of self-interests of individuals; (*c*) The State is an artificial device meant to protect natural rights of individuals and to provide civil liberties to the citizens; (*d*) Relations between individuals should be generally modelled after those of a market society, that is these should be based on mutual consent derived from the consideration of mutual advantage; (*e*) However, the poor and deprived sections should be compensated through the welfare programmes of the State.

Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1792)

Then John Stuart Mill, another exponent of liberal feminism, sought to demonstrate that women were in no way inferior to men in their talents, and pleaded to give them full legal and political rights. Mill argued that society as a whole was losing out if it did not make good use of the rational qualities of women as well as men. He maintained that a more equal relationship between man and woman as marriage partners would ameliorate the qualities of life for both men and women. He advocated reform of the property laws so that women retained rights to their property after marriage.

Among the contemporary exponents of liberal feminism, Betty Friedan (1921-2006), American writer and activist, is most notable. In her most famous work *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), she called for the measures to ensure substantive equality for women in the sphere of work as well as in politics and private life. In *The Second Stage* (1983), she underlined the continued significance of home, family and children for women. Friedan resembles Mary Wollstonecraft and Mill insofar as she does not want to overturn contemporary liberal society. She asserts that the liberal creed of autonomy and self-determination of the individual should be applied to women as well as men. She advocates widespread access to créche and similar facilities to enable women to combine effectively their professional careers and family responsibilities. Friedan is regarded as an inspirational figure for second wave liberal feminists.

Another important contemporary exponent of liberal feminism is Carole Pateman (1940-). She is widely known for her synthesis of conceptual problems in liberal democratic theory with the theory of the patriarchal basis of sexual politics. In her famous essay *The Sexual Contract* (1988), she particularly attacked the misconception that the liberal theory of the 'Social Contract' had overthrown the concept of patriarchal rule.

Social Contract

Social contract refers to an agreement among men whereby they relinquish the hypothetical 'state of nature' and enter into civil society. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), English philosophers, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), French philosopher, are regarded the chief exponents of the theory of the social contract. They have given different accounts of the state of nature, the terms of the contract, and the nature of sovereignty which comes into existence in consequence of the social contract.

Carole Pateman argues that with few exceptions, all exponents of the theory of the social contract deem women to be incapable of moving from natural to civil society except as the subordinates of men. It is not fully true that the triumph of the social contract implied the defeat of patriarchy. Indeed when sons defeated the father-right of rule, the new 'free and equal' individuals literally emerged as a fraternity. The domination of fathers over mothers was also broken but re-established as the domination of all men over all women. In maintaining that the relations between the sexes were private, liberal theorists sought to remove the subject from political inquiry. Unless we acknowledge that women in liberal society are 'individuals' in the same way as men, the reforms designed to give 'freedom of contract' to women similar to that given to men will not fundamentally alter the sexual basis of the social contract. Pateman has pleaded for the reconstruction of a social contract which would ensure substantive equality between men and women.

In a nutshell, liberal feminism accepts the liberal assumptions about the value to be accorded to individuality and freedom, but campaigns to achieve their equal realization for women as well as men. This is the most popular stream of feminist movement, but it is not considered to be very influential.

RADICAL FEMINISM

> Woman's degradation is in man's idea of his sexual rights.
>
> Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1860)

Radical feminism focuses on the all-pervading male domination in society and calls for overturning of gender oppression. Although it arose in mid-twentieth century, its early hints are found in early twentieth century, particularly in the writings of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), English novelist and essayist. In her famous essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf dwelled on how men socially and psychically dominate women. She argued that women are simultaneously victims of themselves as well as of men by acting as mirrors to men. Then Simone de Beauvoir (1908-86), French novelist and author of *The Second Sex* (1949), sought to challenge Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) famous dictum 'Anatomy is destiny' (of woman) when she asserted: 'A woman is not born but made.' She argued that the dependent, derivative status of woman as 'the other of man' was the product of her upbringing in society. She exhorted women to strive for transforming their status and life-style across all social and cultural reference points.

> Society, being codified by man, decrees that woman is inferior : She can do away with this inferiority only by destroying the male's superiority.
>
> Simon de Beauvoir (1953)

Another prominent exponent of radical feminism, Shulamith Firestone (1945-2012), in her celebrated essay *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), argued that women's subordination could not be understood as a symptom or an aspect of some deeper or more comprehensive system of domination, such as racism or class-based division of society. Historically, women constituted the first oppressed group; their subordination could not be eliminated by the changes such as the elimination of prejudice or even the abolition of class society.

Firestone claimed that the basis of women's subordination was ultimately biological. In other words, human reproductive biology was responsible for considering women the weaker sex. Moreover, the survival of women and children required that infants should depend on lactating women, and women, in turn, should depend on men. Happily the material conditions for ending this hitherto inevitable dependence had finally been achieved in the twentieth century with the advent of reliable contraception, baby foods and 'test-tube babies'. These technological developments provided women the means of freeing themselves from the tyranny of their reproductive biology and diffusing the child-bearing and child-rearing role to society as a whole, men as well as women.

Then Kate Millett (1934-2017), in her famous essay *Sexual Politics* (1971), argued that the relationship between the sexes was based on power and further sustained by an ideology. It was similar to the relationship between classes and races. Hence, it should be treated as a political relationship. Basing her analysis of women's subordination on Max Weber's (1864-1920) theory of domination, Millett argued that men have exercised domination over women in two forms: through *social authority* and *economic force.* Time had now come to smash these implements of man's domination. Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millett are regarded to be the two pillars of radical feminism, who exercised enormous influence on developing the Women's Liberation Movement in 1970s.

SOCIALIST FEMINISM

Socialist feminism recognizes twofold division of capitalist society into (*a*) men and women in which men dominate; and (*b*) capitalists and workers in which capitalists dominate. It holds that here capitalists as well as men are the beneficiaries of women's subordination. Transition to socialism is, therefore, the necessary condition of women's emancipation.

Socialism

Socialism refers to a principle of politics which favours social ownership and control of the means of social production so that all able-bodied persons could be suitably employed in productive work, and all means of social production could be deployed for the fulfilment of social needs.

Initially, Charles Fourier (1772-1837), French social critic and socialist philosopher, argued a case for socialist feminism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He stood for a version of socialism that would be based on equality between men and women. He envisaged a form of social organization in which men and women would enter into group marriages and live in small communities where all men and women would be treated as equal partners. The children born out of these marriages would be brought up together by their common parents without discrimination: boys and girls would get identical treatment.

Later, Friedrich Engels (1820-95), co-founder of Marxism as a close associate of Karl Marx (1818-83), provided a classic account of the origin of gender inequality. In his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), Engels argued that the origins of sexual inequality may be traced to the establishment of patrilineal descent, that is the practice of tracing kinship through the line of father to son and then to grandson, etc. It arose with the advent of private property as a mechanism to ensure that property remains with male descendants only. Engels hoped that the arrival of socialism would abolish both private property and the domestic servitude of women.

Sheila Rowbatham (1943-), contemporary representative of this school, advocated a participatory, decentralized approach to social change that contemplates linking of the struggles of all oppressed groups. In her best-known historical writings—*Women, Resistance and Revolution* (1972) and *Hidden from History* (1973)—Rowbatham tried to reclaim the past for women as a source of knowledge and strength that could contribute to their present struggle. She continued this approach in *The Past is before Us* (1989). As a Marxist, she maintained that the struggle for women's liberation is essentially bound with the struggle against capitalism. She has shown from historical evidence that class exploitation and women's oppression are closely linked phenomena. She argued that the success in these spheres can be achieved only through combining these struggles.

> Man cannot degrade woman without himself falling into degradation; he cannot elevate her without at the same time elevating himself.
>
> Alexander Walker

> We will never solve the feminization of power until we solve the masculinity of wealth.
>
> Gloria Steinem

> Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.
>
> Kofi Annan

Evolution of Feminism

First-wave feminism refers to women's suffrage movements of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its exponents argued that men and women were equal as regards their intellectual and emotional capacities and needs; so the rights enjoyed by men should be equally extended to women. In their view, women's interests were not reducible to those of their husbands.

Second-wave feminism refers to the resurgence of activist feminism in late twentieth century, particularly in 1960s and 1970s. Its exponents attacked on male violence towards women, particularly sexual violence. They rejected feminine norms such as sexual submissiveness and participation in beauty practices. They advocated the liberation of women from the enforced domesticity and insisted on establishing female solidarity and sisterhood.

Post-feminism insists that women should see themselves as agents, and not as victims within the existing social system. Focus on the incidence of violence against women would undermine their real role. The exponents of post-feminism argue that sexuality should be considered a liberating force; all consensual sex should be celebrated. In their view, there is no clash between sexual equality and participation in beauty practices and gendered dress. Women should only focus on their material equality with men.

IV
RECENT TRENDS IN FEMINIST THOUGHT

Contemporary feminist theory seeks to evolve a new critical perspective on political theory so as to enlarge and transform its focus of study. Susan M. Okin, in her important essay *Women in Western Political Thought* (1979), observed that generally speaking the great tradition of political philosophy consisted of 'writings by men, for men, and about men'. As a result, the civic and legal status of women was long considered to be a subject unworthy of theoretical treatment. Most of historians of political thought also happened to be male who looked at the status of women with a sort of contempt.

Contemporary feminist writers argue that male heads of households derive their power to make wars, laws and philosophy from the fact that others work for them in private. In fact *the glory in the 'public' sphere is derived from the exploitation and repression in the 'private' sphere.* Women were restricted by men from entering the public sphere so that they could take care of the needs of their menfolk in the private sphere. With the rise of feminist theory, there has been rethinking not only on the scope of 'politics', but the concepts of liberty, authority, power, equality, justice, citizenship and political obligation, etc. have also been subjected to review and revision.

In another paper on 'Gender, the public, the private' in *Political Theory Today* (1991) edited by David Held, Susan M. Okin argued that political science tends to confuse different usages of the terms 'public' and 'private': first, to refer to the

distinction between state and society; and second, to refer to the distinction between domestic and non-domestic spheres. When the term 'private' is associated with society (as distinguished from state) or its institutions like family, it leads to the exclusion of many essential problems from the conceptual field of political science, such as the problem of justice in everyday life, the political dimension of the family, or inequalities between men and women. According to Okin, this omission is somewhat ironic since the revitalization of modern political theory has in fact coincided with major changes in the family as well as social relations of gender which have been widely challenged by feminist theory and practice.

The new feminist movement of the 1970s contested the trend of separation between 'public' and 'private'; it subscribed to the famous slogan 'the personal is political'. It implied that the democratization of the public sphere is not possible without the prior democratization of the private sphere. Anne Phillips, in her noted essay *Engendering Democracy* (1991), forcefully argued that the public and private spheres must be treated as interdependent, although distinct from each other. The slogan 'the personal is political' or 'the private is political' was interpreted by her to mean that the realm of 'the private' should be included in the realm of 'the political'. In other words, political theory should particularly strive to integrate the private sphere into the area of its analysis rather than restricting itself to the analysis of the public sphere.

Illustrating her point from the functioning of democracy, Phillips argued that to conceptualize democratic participation without considering the constraints faced by women in this sphere would end up in a very narrow view of democracy. She asserted that the inequalities within the family are as relevant to the issues of social justice as inequalities in the public sphere. In her view, higher participation of women in the public sphere was impossible without prior democratization of the private sphere. In political science, the study of power relations in the public sphere would remain incomplete without undertaking the study of power relations in the private sphere. On the other hand, Carole Pateman, in her well-known work *The Disorder of Women* (1989), argued that identifying the sources of women's subordination is only the beginning of reconstructing politics and institutions free from sex inequality.

In a nutshell, the feminist theory embodies an important critical perspective on political theory. It insists on including the analysis of the causes and remedies of subordination of women in all spheres of political thought and action.

> Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition.
>
> Timothy Leary (1920-96)

V
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

A general awareness of the exploitation of women on various fronts like social, cultural, political and economic fronts has led to strong protests manifested in

Women's Liberation Movement, which emerged in the United States since the early 1970s. Soon this movement also spread to Europe and other parts of the world. The movement focused on equal rights and status for women in a male-dominated society. Some prominent organizations associated with this movement were: National Organization for Women (NOW), Boston's Bread and Roses, Berkeley Women's Liberation Group, Women's Radical Action Project, Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), etc.

Broadly speaking, Women's Liberation Movement demanded a truly equal treatment of men and women. It required that many of society's myths, values and beliefs concerning status and role of women in society should be fundamentally reassessed and changed. These changes must embrace the patterns of work and family life, social behaviour, decision-making, politics, religion and education. Even the more personal and private domain of sexuality needed to be redefined. These demands led to a widespread debate on diverse issues concerning women. These include day-care facilities for children, development of a non-sexist vocabulary (*e.g.* the term 'chairman' should be replaced by 'chairperson'), and setting suitable norms for the representation of women in the mass media, including advertising. These debates have not only led to the enactment of new laws in some countries, but also to the worldwide acceptance of new norms protecting the dignity of women.

In India, some important legislation concerning the protection of women includes: the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; and the Commission of *Sati* (Prevention) Act, 1987. Female foeticide was sought to be prevented by the enactment of the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994. The recent legislation concerning empowerment of women includes Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 (which gives equal right to daughters in joint family property) and Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

Feminists also assert that until the condition of equal participation of women in public life is fulfilled, the concept of citizenship cannot be brought to its logical conclusion. In India, a beginning in this direction has been made by making reservation of one-third of the seats in *panchayats* for women. This will encourage women to join politics at grass-root level. By and by their representation at this level can be increased to one-half, and provision can also be made for their adequate representation in legislative assemblies and parliament. The opening up of vast opportunities of higher education for women would also prove to be instrumental to their larger representation in administration and high-profile professions. In this way, the idea of equal citizenship can be fully realized from the feminist point of view.

Feminists argue that even after getting full citizenship in law, women continue to suffer from subjection in their social life. From 1960s and 1970s the status of women in society and politics has become the centre of attention. Earlier it was usually thought that after establishing legal equality of men and women, women were not left with any issue of complaint. After the extension of right-to-vote to women, there were some studies on voting behaviour. It was found that women's

participation in voting was lower in comparison to men. To explain this situation it was argued that women were largely interested in private and domestic affairs; they were less interested in politics and public affairs and probably they had no time to attend to these matters.

However, when the size of the family began to shrink and more and more women took up jobs, the above explanation regarding women's sphere of interest was no longer held to be valid. Again, it was noticed that more and more women were taking part in voting, but their share at various levels of political authority had remained insignificant. While the electorates of various countries of the world had nearly fifty per cent women, their share at the level of political representation was far below that of men. Membership of women in the legislatures of Western Europe was less than ten per cent. Women's share in British House of Commons was less than five per cent. The situation in the United States House of Representatives was not very different. But the situation in the Scandinavian countries was not that bad. In Sweden and Denmark, women's membership of legislatures amounted to twenty-six per cent; in Norway, this figure was thirty-four per cent. In recent years, these figures have slightly gone up.

In the sphere of international politics, the representation of women is still meagre. In November 1990, thirty-four Heads of Government of European countries gathered to sign the historic Charter of Paris for the New Europe. The gathering marked the end of the Cold War. In newspaper headlines it was described as the 'end of an era'. But feminists ask: "Which era had come to an end?" In any case, it was not an end of the patriarchal era. In the group-photo of these thirty-four heads of government, only two women could be spotted after a thorough search. These were: Gro Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, and Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of Britain. Two days after this Conference, Mrs. Thatcher also resigned, and a man replaced her as Prime Minister. In this situation, what is the consequence of granting full political rights to women if their representation in public life remains so negligible? Happily, however, by the end of 2005, Germany had elected its first woman Chancellor. By the beginning of 2006, Chile and Liberia had elected their women Presidents. Then in 2007, India and Argentina had the distinction of having women Presidents.

In the countries outside Europe and America, women's representation is very insignificant at the level of political authority although some women have been successful in attaining top positions. Sri Lanka, Israel, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have the record of having women Prime Ministers or Heads of Government. But on the whole, the number of women holding high offices is very small. Some women have excellent record of performance in various important positions, like those in legislatures, cabinets, bureaucracy, diplomacy, journalism, legal profession, fine arts, academics and scientific research, etc. This record is enough proof of the potential of women's power. But it is no proof of the opportunities open to women as their share in these positions continues to be very meagre.

CONCLUSION

Currently, there are two broad views concerning equal rights for women: (*a*) One view is that there is no difference between men and women as regards their capabilities; hence they should be governed by the same laws; and (*b*) Another view is that women are essentially different from men—biologically, culturally and socially; they should be given equal opportunities to develop and apply their distinctive capabilities along with equal rights. Thus, women could be exempted from hazardous tasks, like underground mining and working in night shifts. Similarly, women should be entitled to maternity leave and related benefits, arrangements for maintenance and custody of children after divorce, etc. Besides, in order to compensate women for their under-representation in important positions, reservations for women should be made in the seats for higher learning, appointments, seats in legislatures, etc. They should also be given tax concessions in order to encourage them to work for additional income. This view seems to be more reasonable and is widely endorsed.

Worldwide concern for gender justice was expressed in *Human Development Report,* 1995, issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It sought to include the 'gender-related development index' (GDI) for a group of 130 countries (out of a total of 174 countries included in the report). Further, it also included the estimation of the 'gender empowerment measure' (GEM) or the extent to which women participate in a country's economic and political life. According to this report, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark came out on top with the highest GDI and GEM scores, indicating the virtual absence of any gender bias in their development process. The most gender-biased societies, with scores under 0.3 (compared to a maximum possible value of 1.00) are mostly African or Islamic nations. India ranks 99 in terms of GDI of the 130 countries included in the report. Further progress on this front has been far from satisfactory. According to the United Nations Human Development Report, 2014, India ranks 132 out of 148 countries on the Gender Development Index. This is attributed to lower life expectancy among women and a wide gap between the incomes of men and women.

The Human Development Report (1995) defined gender equality as follows:

> Moving towards gender equality is not a technocratic goal—it is a political process... It requires a new way of thinking—in which the stereotyping of women and men gives way to a new philosophy that regards all people, irrespective of gender, as essential agents of change.

Significantly, the report does not find any correlation between gender bias and a country's economic development. A poor economy like Cuba, which ranks 72 on Human Development Index (of the 174 countries), ranks 47 on the GDI and 16 on the GEM (of the 130 countries). Commending China and Cuba for their support of women, the present report observes:

> Countries applying socialist models used social and political mobilization to achieve rapid and equal progress in education and health for women and men and to engineer social transformations to expand opportunities for women.

It is interesting to note that there is no essential correlation between GDI and

GEM in many cases. This means that they have given adequate attention to health care and education of women, but no adequate share in the exercise of power. This is illustrated by the case of 'economic tigers' of East Asia where in spite of substantial improvement in the level of development of women, they have been denied a tangible share in economic and political power, in an essentially male-dominated society.

In a nutshell, feminist perspective on justice calls for securing the overall development of women, including improvement of their health and education as well as giving them adequate share in economic and political power.

VI
STATUS OF THE GIRL-CHILD

Conventional notion of rights envisages equal rights of all citizens (as in the case of civil, political and social-economic rights) or all human beings (as in the case of human rights). When we refer to the rights of any special category, we seek these rights by way of protective discrimination, that is for giving protection to some vulnerable section of society which has been identified as the victim of unjust discrimination. There are so many vulnerable categories of people such as women, children, coloured races, primitive tribes, low-caste or outcaste people, religious or linguistic minorities, the poor, neglected or deserted persons, and so on. In this context, girl-child represents a typically vulnerable category. Ordinarily, girl-child is vulnerable at two levels: (*a*) as a child; and (*b*) as a female (that is subject to gender discrimination). So she suffers from 'double vulnerability factor'. Among children, orphans are most vulnerable. So if a girl-child is an orphan also, she would be more vulnerable than an ordinary girl-child. In some cases, other causes of vulnerability such as belonging to a coloured race, low caste or poor class might be present. Combination of such factors would result in what may be called 'multiple vulnerability syndrome'.

EXTENT OF VULNERABILITY OF THE GIRL-CHILD

Jewel Amoah ('The World on Her Shoulders: The Rights of the Girl-Child in the Context of Culture and Identity' in *Essex Human Rights Review*, September 2007) has identified four factors of vulnerability of the girl-child: "the girl-child is marginalized, because of the intersection of her gender, age, race and culture." Where a girl-child is disadvantaged due to the intersection of all these factors, way to her emancipation must be searched in this area. As Amoah further observed: "If the girl-child's right to substantive equality is to be fully realized, then consideration must be given to her intersecting identity and the cultural context in which she lives. Anything less aggravates the burden of inequality borne by the shoulders of the girl-child."

Of the four factors enumerated by Amoah as the cause of marginalization of the girl-child, occurrence of three, *viz.* gender, age and culture is almost universal. Presence of the fourth factor, *viz.* race, would be occasional. Its consideration may

be included only in a specific case-study. We will focus here on the universal factors only. Tender age is an obvious factor of vulnerability of the girl-child. Gender factor already implies a cultural bias. Distinction between sex (a biological fact) and gender (a sociological fact) brings in the role of culture in this sphere to our consideration. The notion of gender assigns inferior status and role to women in social hierarchy and tends to place women in a disadvantaged position *vis-à-vis* men. Girl-child shares this disadvantage from the moment of her birth, rather before her birth, particularly in some pockets of India, if it could be known before birth that the baby in the womb of the mother is a girl!

In Indian mythology, a woman was treated as the property of her husband like a holy cow. Many men 'gifted' their wives to strangers in order to maintain their glory and gain divine blessings. Inferior status of woman *vis-à-vis* man is ingrained in our cultural tradition.

A typical example from the practices prevailing in Indian society would illustrate how a girl-child is discriminated against on account of her gender. Here a son is treated as an asset; a daughter as a liability. Because of the patriarchal family structure where eldest male is designated as head of the family, the son is treated as the successor of family property, business or profession, family's name and reputation, and so on. On the other hand, the daughter is destined to be married to an outsider when she ceases to be the part of her parents' family. From the moment of her birth a girl-child is dubbed 'another's property' (*paraya dhan*). While entering into marital relationship of his daughter, a girl's father is supposed to behave very modestly towards boy's father. That is why a boy's father always holds his head very high, and a girl's father is expected to be very modest everywhere. Moreover, the girl's father should not only throw a grand reception to the bridal procession but give a handsome dowry at the time of the departure of his beloved daughter. The spectre of dowry is so big that it begins to haunt from the moment of a daughter's birth. In some cases, dowry demands may continue to pour in even after marriage and departure of the daughter, resulting in bride's harassment. In extreme cases, this may culminate in 'bride burning' or 'bride's suicide'.

In a marital relationship, all members of the girl's family are expected to remain submissive to their counterparts in her husband's family throughout their life. Nobody would visit his married daughter's or sister's house without befitting gifts. In return, he is not supposed to take even 'a glass of water' from his daughter's or sister's house, not to speak of accepting any tangible gift! In common parlance, the brother-in-law of a man is sought to be redefined in the Indian context! His wife's brother will be called 'brother-in-law — the loser', while his sister's husband will be called 'brother-in-law — the gainer'.

Since a son is regarded as the carrier of his family's name and tradition, special attention is paid to higher education of the son. Similar education is not regarded to be necessary for a daughter. Moreover, in marriage relationship, a bridegroom is expected to have higher educational and professional status. Sometimes, a talented daughter is denied higher education on the pretext of the ensuing difficulty in finding a suitable match for her. Then after marriage, a husband devotes more time and energy to his professional upgradation whereas a wife has to devote a lot of

time and energy to domestic work and bringing up children at the expense of her professional success. In short, lower status of woman in comparison to man seems to be the destiny of woman.

Among Hindus, cremation ceremony of the dead body of a person is to be performed by his son, which is believed to ensure dead person's entry into heaven. It is believed that if the dead person had only daughters and no son, he would not be entitled to a place in heaven. Even at the obituary ceremony of a dead person, the formal crown of succession (*pagdi*) is to be put on the head of his eldest son even if he is a child! Existence or presence of a dead person's daughter — however mature, talented and competent — is not given any cognizance. In orthodox families, if a dead person had only daughters and no son, his property would pass to his nephews, and not to his daughters!

As a result of this attitude, girls are taught to be submissive and subservient from the very beginning and they are expected to continue to remain so in their maturity and even in their old age. Alienation of girls from the family sometimes takes an ugly form. In some tribes and among poor and ignorant families, many inhuman methods for elimination of the girl-child have been in vogue. These include: poisoning, throat splitting, starvation, smothering and drowning. Many newly born girls are thrown on garbage dump to die an ungraceful death. Many a girl-child are treated as the object of sacrifice. Some could be sold to strangers as a relief to the poverty of their family members. Some young girls are formally offered to deities to live as sex-slaves of priests and distinguished visitors of the temple, for the deliverance of their family members from their sins. In India some girls are persuaded or forced to become *devadasis*. In Africa some girls are forced to become *trokosis*. Like *devadasis,* apparently these girls are offered to a god for condonation of the sins of their families, but in actual practice they work as unpaid servants and sex-slaves of the priests. Again, in many countries among Christians, young girls are motivated to sacrifice a comfortable life for the redemption of their families and become nuns. They have to remain unmarried throughout their life, lead a simple and pious life and devote themselves to the service of the distressed people.

In Indian culture, birth of a daughter is regarded to have some redeeming features also. Birth of a daughter is hailed as the arrival of 'Lakshmi' (Goddess of Wealth). Giving away a daughter in marriage (*kanyadan*) to a meritorious bridegroom is hailed as most virtuous and noblest deed on earth. Reception of a daughter's bridal procession would turn one's house to a sacred place. A particular festival among Hindus (which falls twice a year) is devoted to worship of the girl-child (*kanya-pujan*) as representative of the Goddess of Power. It is also believed that a daughter's sentimental attachment to parents is far ahead of a son's attachment. A sister's good wishes to a brother, particularly expressed on the occasions of two important festivals — *rakhi* and *bhaiduj* — are regarded to be the door to good fortune. A virtuous daughter like *Sita* (wife of Lord *Rama* and daughter of King *Janak*) would immortalize the name of her father apart from bringing good luck to her husband's family. Parents who have only sons and no daughter or grand daughter are considered to be incomplete human beings. Now all these advantages of having a daughter are largely symbolic and sentimental which may or may not be regarded as tangible benefits in the materialistic world today. Those who indulge in cost-

benefit analysis in materialistic terms would still treat the birth of a daughter as a source of loss. This retrograde attitude has led to the inhuman practice of female foeticide.

Indeed discrimination against girl-children is a global phenomenon. It threatens their life even before birth, in their infancy and childhood and continues in their adulthood. Girl-children are exposed to discrimination and violence at every place including their home, school, neighbourhood, markets, streets, public parks, and so on. Unfortunately, if they are deprived of parental care or family support, girl-children are the worst sufferers. At social level, the low value placed on girls gives rise to their exclusion and exploitation and subjects them to various types of violence. They are particularly exposed to social, psychological, physical, mental and emotional risk. They also suffer from material deprivation at home and various institutions. In some cases, they turn out to be victims of gender-based violence, harmful social and traditional practices such as child marriage or female genital mutilation, trafficking and worst forms of child labour, prostitution, high incidence of HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health complications, etc. They are commonly denied the right to education, proper nutrition, medical care and adequate rest. In short, they have little opportunity to maintain their health, not to speak of personality development.

In some parts of India and the third world, girls and women become the victims of 'honour killing'. They are supposed to carry the burden of 'honour' of the family. It is not an 'honour' for them, but the most onerous responsibility of following a very strict discipline. The moment a girl is found exercising her freedom in choosing her partner herself, she is accused of violating the 'honour' of her family and brutally killed by the family elders.

Honour Killing

Honour killing refers to a retrograde practice which imposes very strict discipline on woman, and requires her to avoid mixing with strangers. The moment a girl is found exercising her freedom in choosing her partner herself, she is accused of violating the 'honour' of her family, and brutally killed by the family elders.

This inhuman act is now called 'horror killing'.

THE CURSE OF FEMALE FOETICIDE

Female foeticide involves the use of medical technology to identify the sex of the foetus and selectively abort female foetus. It means killing the girl-child before her birth. This crime is more heinous than an infanticide. It implies not only the denial of right to life of a girl-child, but her right to take birth. It is a glaring example of misuse of scientific technology which was introduced to facilitate a series of pre-natal diagnostic tests to identify and cure any potential inborn defects of children before their birth. Sex determination of the foetus was only a part of investigation, and not a purpose of this test. However, some unscrupulous elements who were conversant with this technology, with the connivance of parents or other decision-makers of the respective families, resorted to a gross misuse of this technology for sex determination of the foetus and selective abortion of the female foetus.

Female foeticide is now widely practised in different parts of the world, particularly in India, China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). These countries account for nearly half of the world's population. This practice of killing of girls before their birth causes a significant imbalance in the ratio of boys and girls in the world, and consequently fewer wives and mothers for future generations. The magnitude of this practice in Asia has been creating a worldwide demographic imbalance with serious economic and social consequences. Over 100 million women are now missing in this region which is the cause and consequence of mounting crime against women.

In India, two-child norm also got mixed up with female foeticide. Parents and elders in a family usually wish that of the two children, at least one should be a boy. If a girl was already born, and the second baby in the womb is detected to be a female, it becomes the victim of foeticide. Unlike many other social evils attributed to poverty, the incidence of female foeticide cannot to attributed to poverty and ignorance. In the absence of authentic data on the volume of female foeticide, the declining ratio of boys' and girls' population in particular regions could be taken as an indicator of the prevalence of this practice. It reveals that this practice is more prevalent in the economically affluent states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and some districts of Gujarat. These states have the distinction of having more people who can pay for expensive tests for sex determination of the babies in their mothers' wombs. Clearly it is those who can 'afford to choose' the sex of their child that resort to the use of this sophisticated technology.

This grossly inhuman practice must be stopped forthwith and effectively, not only to secure justice for the girl-child but also to save humanity from an impending catastrophe.

MEASURES TO STOP THE PRACTICE OF FEMALE FOETICIDE

Legal provisions against the practice of female foeticide already exist. The Code of Medical Ethics now inserted in the Medical Council Act, 1956, as amended from time to time reads: "On no account, sex determination test shall be undertaken with the intent to terminate the life of a female foetus developing in her mother's womb, unless there are other absolute indications for termination of pregnancy as specified in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971."

It further provides: "Any act of termination of pregnancy of normal female foetus, amounting to female foeticide, shall be regarded as professional misconduct on the part of the physician leading to penal erasure besides rendering him liable to criminal proceedings as per the provisions of this act."

The main law for prosecuting persons who are engaging in sex-selective abortion is the *Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques* (*Regulation and Prevention of Misuse*) *Act, 1994*. This Act prohibits misuse and advertisement of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for sex determination of foetus leading to female foeticide. According to this act, the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques should be undertaken only for determination of specific genetic abnormalities or disorders under certain conditions and only by the registered institutions. It prescribes severe punishment for violation of these

conditions.

This Act was later amended and renamed as *Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act* (*PCPNDT Act*), *2003*. It is designed to strengthen the provisions of the previous Act. It prohibits the causing of sex selection before or after the conception. It broadens advertising prohibitions. It prohibits the sale of any ultrasound machine or imaging machine or scanner or any other equipment capable of detecting the sex of a foetus to any clinic or person not registered under the Act. It provides for rigorous punishment for the violators of this Act.

Apart from these legal provisions, some initiatives were developed by Government and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations). These include: mass campaigns and rallies for awareness; workshops, lectures, video spots, advertising and publication of articles; cash assistance to the families where second daughter is born; constitution of vigil communities and task forces, etc.

For effective protection of rights of the girl-child and enforcement of the ban on female foeticide, awareness must be generated among men and women regarding changing social conditions in which full potential of the girl-child can be realized. The old prejudice regarding inherent inferiority of the girl in comparison to boy is now giving way to scientific knowledge. It has now been proved that there is no difference between intellectual capabilities of men and women. Women have proved their excellence on all fronts: politics, administration, technological skills, creative arts, academics, journalism, legal and medical professions, and even in the field of sports. Those who lagged behind in this sphere did so due to the lack of opportunity of higher education and their involvement in trivial matters. Discrimination between son and daughter stems from false prejudice and ignorance. It is a mere superstition that he who has only daughters and no son, is not entitled to a place in heaven.

Elder women have to play a still greater role in the emancipation of the girl-child. If they realize the equal values of boys and girls and stop discrimination between them in extending the facilities of education, nutrition, relaxation, amusement, health-care, learning various arts and skills, etc. they will find the girls doing their job more sincerely, attaining full excellence and a good name for the family. As older generation is now becoming financially self-dependent, parents need not look to their sons for looking after them in their old age. Now due to diversification of professions and increasing geographical mobility, most of the newly-wed couples are setting up neo-local residence (instead of living in joint families) where husband's and wife's close relatives are equally welcome. So parents can seek emotional security from their sons and daughters equally.

Q. 1. "Sex and gender represent natural inequality and conventional inequality respectively." Elucidate and comment.

2. Critically examine the broad streams of feminist thought in contemporary political theory.

3. What are the conditions responsible for the plight of the girl-child? What measures do you suggest for her emancipation?

17

Ecological Perspective

I
ECOLOGY AND ECO-PHILOSOPHY

Ecological perspective is concerned with an area where natural science and social philosophy tend to converge. It is an area where facts of natural science show the way to moral conclusions. Ecology comes within the purview of natural science; eco-philosophy implies the moral conclusions drawn from the study of ecology.

Ecology stands for the study of the relationships through which populations of various species affect and are affected by their physical environment. In short, ecology is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their environment. It draws attention to the network of relationships that sustain all forms of life, and focuses on the interconnectedness of nature. The term 'ecology' was originally coined by Ernest Haeckel, German zoologist as early as 1870 to denote 'the investigation of the total relations of the animal world both to its organic and its inorganic environment'. Its scope was soon extended beyond the study of animals so as to cover both plant life and human societies.

In due course, the study of human ecology led to the warning that the physical environment was becoming incapable of satisfying the ever-increasing human wants. By 1960s, ecological perspective underwent the process of globalization which led to the concept of 'ecosphere'. As Ted Benton observed :

> The dramatic 'doomwatch' warnings of Paul Ehrlich, Edward Goldsmith, the authors of *Limits of Growth* and others writing at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s resulted from attempts to extrapolate current global trends in population, pollution and resource depletion into the future, setting them against the ecological recognition of a finite global 'carrying capacity' ('Ecology' in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Social Thought*, ed. by William Outhwaite, Tom Bottomore ; 1994).

Since the terms 'ecology' and 'environment' are used almost synonymously in the current debates on 'carrying capacity' of the earth and its impact on the future

of mankind, the terms 'ecologism', 'environmentalism' and 'eco-philosophy' are also applied almost synonymously. In short, eco-philosophy calls for a review of the damage done to the nature in the course of unbridled industrialization, urbanization and multiplication of human wants. It insists that in order to ensure a healthy survival of mankind, the relation between man and nature should no longer be conceived as that of 'master and servant', but as the one of partnership. Michael Kenny has tried to define ecologism and environmentalism in slightly different ways :

> *Ecologism*...is concerned primarily with a fundamental shift in the relationship between humans and nature so that humans no longer operate as the 'master' of the natural world but as partners with other living organisms..... *Environmentalism,* on the other hand, involves a different approach to Green politics, attempting to deploy the techniques and ideas of the mainstream to achieve a cleaner and environmentally safer version of contemporary society. It does not therefore constitute a separate ideology
> ('Ecologism' in *Political Ideologies—An Introduction,* ed. by Robert Eccleshall, *et al* ; 1994).

Green Politics

Green politics refers to the style of politics which grew out of the concern for the ecological stability of the planet and the quality of life in industrial societies. It became popular in Germany and other European countries, particularly in 1970s and 1980s although it could not achieve an impressive success in elections. The term 'green' implies its focus on the freshness of nature. In short, green politics aims at the preservation of nature in the face of threats to environmental degradation.

In fact the goals of ecologism and environmentalism largely coincide, and it would not be out of place to use these terms synonymously.

Ecologism

Ecologism refers to the view that ecology, *i.e.* "the pattern and balance of relationships between plants, animals, people and their environment" (*Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*) is a self-sustaining system; that no damage should be done to this system for the satisfaction of human need or greed, as it would be injurious to everyone's life. Ecologism calls for a review of the damage done to the nature in the course of unbridled industrialization, urbanization and multiplication of human wants. It insists that in order to ensure a healthy survival of mankind, the relation between man and nature should no longer be conceived as that of 'master and servant', but as one of friendship and partnership.

II
MAIN CONCERNS OF ECO-PHILOSOPHY

At the beginning of human civilization, population was very small. People led

a simple life. They were very close to nature. Their needs were very limited. A small amount of production was sufficient to fulfil their needs. Whatever elements (like oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, etc.) they extracted from nature, were replenished through the natural cycles. So the normal consumption by human beings did not cause any damage to nature. The stock of natural resources was so large and their consumption was so little that nobody could anticipate any shortage of these resources in the future.

But with the passage of time human population multiplied; people's level of consumption rose up, and superior technology was evolved to fulfil their increasing demands. This led to a large-scale exploitation of natural resources so much so that their stock seemed to be depleting. Again the use of artificial goods in people's day-to-day life increased which took them away from nature. The changing patterns of their consumption began to cause contamination of nature. Deterioration of environment manifested itself in the form of global warming, acidification of soil and water, drastic decline in the quality of air, soil and water. Reckless exploitation of natural resources of the soil through mining activities, drastic changes in land use and land cover through over-exploitation of natural resources led to the desertification of landscapes and rapid depletion of biodiversity, *i.e.* the existence of diverse types of living beings on earth which helps to maintain the eco-system. Under the circumstances, new efforts were needed to restore equilibrium between human beings and nature. In politics, the response to this situation came in the form of environmentalism.

> We can no longer throw our waste away because there is no "away".
>
> William T. Cahill (1971)

Early hints of environmentalism may be found in E.F. Schumacher's famous essay *Small is Beautiful* (1973) which contained a critique of modern industrial society. He observed: "the modern industrial system, with all its intellectual sophistication, consumes the very basis on which it has been erected." Schumacher warned that the earth and its non-renewable resources should not be confused with the concept of 'capital' which we create and then spend or invest. In fact certain natural resources cannot be created and certainly cannot be increased. By consuming these resources modern industrial society is running a business which is eating away its own capital. It is digging its own grave.

Advanced industrial societies, with higher rates of production and consumption, are more responsible for environmental degradation and pollution than the developing societies. As Ted Trainer *(Abandon Affluence!;* 1985) observed: Each American uses 617 times as much energy per year as the average for Ethiopians. Unduly higher level of consumption by Americans is also corroborated by other source of data. It is pointed out that Americans comprise 6% of world population, but they are responsible for consumption of about 50% of manufactured goods and 33% of energy of the world. This leaves very little for the poor countries with vast populations. This trend is not good for the health of Americans themselves, not to speak of its role in the impoverishment of others.

> Man is complex—he makes deserts bloom and lakes die.
>
> Laurence J. Peter (1983)

Environmentalists argue that the people of advanced nations should reduce the use of private vehicles and increase the use of public transport and bicycles. They should switch over to consumption of green vegetables and pulses from that of fish and mutton. They should promote the use of wind energy and solar energy instead of coal, electricity and nuclear energy. *Environmentalists encourage plantation of trees all over the world.* In fact environmentalist movement has motivated many Americans to running, cycling, taking natural food and living in rural areas. Similar trend is visible in other countries of the world also. Environmentalists wish that human beings should maintain friendly relations with nature, and should not damage it. Since they insist on maintaining greenery of nature, their outlook is also described as 'Green movement' or 'Green politics'.

> Pollution doesn't respect state boundaries, and it is difficult if not impossible to solve these problems on a state-by-state basis.
>
> S. William Becker (1989)

According to environmentalists, the blind race for increasing exploitation of natural resources in the name of development has alienated human beings from nature physically as well as spiritually. In order to restore a harmonious relationship between the two, human beings will have to learn a degree of 'humility' toward their environment including the various types of species on earth. We must realize that the relentless extraction of natural minerals and other resources to feed an increasingly greedy manufacturing system gives rise to environmental degradation and causes immense harm to humanity. It pours various pollutants into the atmosphere which damage the health of all living beings including plants and animals. This process is also responsible for greenhouse effect, global warming and ozone depletion which pose a danger to the very existence of mankind.

Greenhouse Effect

Greenhouse effect refers to the process involving increase in earth's temperature due to accumulation of carbon dioxide and water vapour in warm air trapped by a mass of cold air. As a result, the heat generated by infra-red rays from the sun is absorbed in the earth's atmosphere and surface temperatures start rising. This would further result in the melting of polar ice.

Global Warming

Global warming refers to the process involving extraordinary rise in earth's temperature due to increasing atmospheric pollution. This pollution results from the increasing consumption of petrol and diesel as well as from the soil erosion caused by cutting of forests and mountains. It is feared that it will give rise to climate change, the melting of polar ice and consequent rise in sea-level.

Ozone Depletion

Ozone is a concentrated form of oxygen. Its molecule consists of three oxygen atoms whereas a molecule of ordinary oxygen consists of two atoms. The 'ozone layer' exists between 10 and 50 kilometres above the earth's surface. There it absorbs nearly all of the high-energy ultra-violet radiation from the sun, thereby protecting plants and animals from its damaging effects. It is feared that increasing atmospheric pollution has caused depletion of ozone resulting in a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica.

In order to save mankind from imminent catastrophe, environmentalists wish to dismantle the prevailing large-scale industrial system and to replace it by smaller-scale manufacturing system which would be sustained by a number of self-governing, local communities. In other words, they recommend that the existing system of production at monstrous scale should be reduced to one at a human scale. Small communities with a moderate level of consumption, and organized at smaller scale represent the model world of environmentalists. That is precisely the idea behind Schumacher's famous dictum : 'Small is beautiful'.

In order to curb the overall level of consumption, environmentalists also demand reduction in population. It is true that the teeming millions in the third world (the bulk of the developing nations of the world) comprise the major source of its social and economic problems. But it should not be forgotten that their levels of consumption are very low, and proper planning can help in utilizing their immense potential of physical and mental labour. On the other hand, people in the West who are used to comfortable living and extremely high level of consumption also need reasonable population control, apart from the control on their consumption.

Finally, environmentalists insist on moral regeneration of mankind in order to ensure a just and equitable distribution of resources. If individuals of all countries realize their responsibility to maintain a clean and congenial atmosphere on the globe, they will certainly make it worth living for the present as well as future generations. This idea is aptly expressed in a U.N. slogan: "We have not inherited this planet from our parents ; we have borrowed it from our children."

The real owners of the land are not yet born.

Kannada (Indian) saying

Again, the sense of individual responsibility is expressed in another environmentalist slogan: "Think globally, act locally." When mankind is organized into small communities, people are required to act locally. When they are conscious of the effect of their activities on the global environment, they tend to think globally. A still another slogan of British and German environmentalists exhorts people to forget their ideological differences and act together for a better future of mankind. It reads: "Neither left nor right, but forwards."

III
CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

The concept of development was evolved in the sphere of social sciences for the guidance of new nations who won their independence after the Second World War (1939-45). Indeed the idea of development itself was not new. Early indications of this idea are found in the social thought of nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It was largely expressed in the theory of social change. The change could be conceived as the transition from simple to complex forms, from less efficient to more efficient forms, or from lower to higher forms. *Development may be identified as a process in which a system or institution is transformed into stronger, more organized, more efficient and more effective form and proves to be more satisfying in terms of human wants and aspirations*. It may be distinguished from progress, as development is subject to measurement on empirical scale whereas progress is a matter of moral judgement for which it applies normative criterion.

Progress

Progress refers to the process in which a system or institution is transformed into a new form which is regarded better than and morally superior to the old form. Progress is distinguished from other concepts of social change (evolution, development, etc.) as it involves moral judgement and evaluation. While other models of social change try to measure it on empirical scale, the concept of progress applies normative criterion to ascertain its value for humanity.

Conventional theories of social change focus on the process of modernization, that is the process of transition of society from the traditional to the modern form. It is generally believed that a modern society is more efficient and capable of fulfilling the needs and aspirations of the modern man than a traditional society. Conventional theories of social change were propounded by several French, English and German thinkers.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), French philosopher, postulated that with the advancement of science our social organization is transformed from a 'military society' into 'industrial society'. In this sense, military society refers to a form of organization which is characterized by the regimentation of thought and action while industrial society paves the way for freedom of thought. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), English philosopher, also described political evolution in terms of transition from 'military society' to 'industrial society'. For Spencer, military society represented the tendency of integration while industrial society was characterized by differentiation. In other words, in military society, relationships among people are designed to promote uniformity while in industrial society, they are encouraged to promote variety.

Henry Sumner Maine (1822-88), British jurist and legal historian, argued that all progressive societies proceed from 'status' to 'contract'. Status denotes fixed position of the individual within the prevailing social set up whereas contract indicates his freedom to enter into new relations at his free will. In fact, Spencer's distinction between military society and industrial society closely corresponds to Maine's distinction between status and contract.

Then Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936), German sociologist, advanced his famous theory of transition from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*, that is from 'community' to 'association', for analysing changes in the social organization. A community is based on 'natural will' whereas an association is based on 'rational will'. A community is characterized by cultural homogeneity and enduring relationships whereas an association is marked by cultural heterogeneity and calculative, contractual relationships. Tönnies observed that the loss of sense of community in modern societies was responsible for the social problems created by the breakdown of traditional social structures.

Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), French sociologist, argued that less advanced societies represent 'mechanical solidarity' (based on similarity between individuals) while modern advanced societies are characterized by 'organic solidarity' (based on complementarities between individuals which necessitate division of labour). Then Max Weber (1864-1920), German sociologist, described the distinction between traditional and modern societies on a different basis. He observed that traditional society is organized around traditional authority which is based on long-established custom, whereas modern society is ruled by legal-rational authority which rests on the rules framed on rational basis.

Broadly speaking, each of the foregoing theories of social change projects a pattern of change from traditional to modern society. These may, therefore, be compendiously described as conventional theories of modernization.

Conventional Theories of Modernization

Exponent of the Theory	*Nationality*	*Pattern of Change*	
		from (Traditional)	*to (Modern)*
Auguste Comte (1798-1857)	French	Military Society	Industrial Society
Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)	English	Military Society	Industrial Society
Sir Henry Maine (1822-88)	English	Status	Contract
Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936)	German	*Gemeinschaft* (Community) (Predominated by natural will)	*Gesellschaft* (Association) (predominated by rational will)
Émile Durkheim (1858-1971)	French	Mechanical Solidarity	Organic Solidarity
Max Weber (1864-1920)	German	Tradiional Authority	Legal-Rational Authority

Under the concept of development, we first identify some characteristics of an advanced society and then analyse the process of transition of society from its lower forms to higher forms. In other words, development implies a conscious effort for the attainment of a specific goal. The condition of society in terms of its distance from that goal may be described as the level of its development. J.H. Mittelman (*Out from Underdevelopment: Prospects for the Third Word* ; 1988) has tried to define development as 'the increasing capacity to make rational use of natural and human resources for social ends', whereas underdevelopment refers to 'the blockage which forestalls a rational transformation of the social structure'. Other important definitions of development also tend to convey this idea in more or less elaborate form. Thus Paul Baran *(The Political Economy of Growth* ; 1957) described development as 'a far-reaching transformation of society's economic, social and political structure, of the dominant organization of production, distribution and consumption'. He pointed out that it 'has never been a smooth, harmonious process unfolding placidly over time and space'. Then Welter Rodney (*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* ; 1974) identified development as 'a many-sided process', implying for the individual 'increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being'.

In short, people wish to make best use of their natural and human resources in order to achieve their social ends. The process which fructifies their effort in this direction is called 'development'; the factors which hinder them in this effort are called 'underdevelopment'. Since the concept of development was specifically addressed to the 'developing countries' or 'developing nations', it would be essential to understand the status of this set of countries. They are also popularly known as the 'third world'.

Third World

'Third World' includes the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which were the victims of colonial exploitation in the past and are still characterized by a low level of economic and political development as compared to industrially advanced nations of the world. Although these countries are faced with tremendous problems of social-economic and political development, yet they constitute such a vast majority of the world's population and world's sovereign states that if they act in unison, they are bound to play a decisive role in the future of world politics.

The term 'Third World' in this sense was popularized by a French economist and demographer, Alfred Sauvy (1898-1990) who coined it in 1952.

THE PROBLEM OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Development is primarily a positive phenomenon. It stands for improvement of human life in all spheres. But when it comes to economic sphere, some of its side effects may prove to be negative. Economic development demands higher production which involves exploitation of natural resources. In the modern age of gigantic machines operated by huge energy resources to meet the ever-growing demand for consumption, our natural resources are fast depleting. Can this process continue indefinitely? Do we have unlimited stock of natural resources? Doesn't

their mindless exploitation to match the pattern of our consumption have an ill effect on our environment? If so, what can we do to stop an imminent disaster? These are the questions which have stirred the minds of the champions of sustainable development.

> Industrialism is the systematic exploitation of wasteland assets. Progress is merely an acceleration in the rate of that exploitation. Such prosperity as we have known upto the present is the consequence of rapidly spending the planet's irreplaceable capital.
>
> Aldous Huxley (1950)

The concept of sustainable development was aptly defined by the now famous *Brundtland Report*, entitled *Our Common Future*, published in 1987. Recognizing that the natural resources are not inexhaustible, it *insisted that the development process should be aimed to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.* In fact this idea was floated earlier during the Earth Summit held at Stockholm in 1972. This summit expressed a serious concern at the rapid depletion of the exhaustible natural resources. Brundtland Report endorsed these observations and sought to give a new direction to the process of development.

The prominence given to 'needs' of the present as well as the future in the Brundtland Report reflects a concern to eradicate poverty and meet basic needs of the vast humanity. The concept of sustainable development focused attention on finding strategies to promote economic and social development without causing environmental degradation, over-exploitation or pollution. The emphasis on development was particularly welcomed by the developing countries and the groups who were primarily concerned about poverty and social deprivation. The debate on sustainable development has remained a favourite subject of the champions of environmentalism.

> In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences.
>
> Robert Green Ingersoll (1988)

> The landscape has been so transformed by ignorance, arrogance and greed that those who must prove their case are not those who call for forest protection, but those who call for business as usual.
>
> Richard Brown (1990)

IV
VARIETIES OF ECO-PHILOSOPHY

Principles of eco-philosophy may be applied to various fields. Thereby we arrive at several varieties of eco-philosophy. Of these, four are particularly important: (*a*) Ecocentrism; (*b*) Ecological humanism; (*c*) Eco-feminism ; and (*d*) Eco-socialism.

ECO-CENTRISM

Eco-centrism, biocentrism or biocentric environmentalism treats the preservation of the biosphere in all its complexity as its final goal. Its slogan is 'Earth First!' Biosphere means the part of the world where organisms can live. So eco-centrism pays equal importance to all living beings—plants and animals as well as human beings. It *does not concede primacy of human beings*. It does not care to see how far the preservation of the biosphere will be beneficial to human life! The most notorious example of this line of thinking came in the form of a statement that AIDS virus was a good thing because it would reduce human populations, and therefore help towards the recovery of the biosphere!

Critics of eco-centrism have particularly attacked its anti-humanist attitude. Of all living beings, man alone is capable of repairing as well as damaging the nature according to his wisdom or greed. Even the champions of 'sustainable development' seek to maintain the stock of natural resources for the benefit of humanity—its present as well as future generations. What is the use of the so-called philosophy where the worth of human beings is reduced to, say, that of bacteria!

American theorist Murray Bockchin, in his *Remaking Society* (1989), has argued that the exploitation of the environment by human beings stems from the exploitation of human being by human being, and that eradication of the latter is a necessary condition for dealing with the former. If we blame 'humanity' (all of it) for environmental destruction, we shall be treating human beings as a blight on the planet. This view would also amount to ignoring the fact that some activities of human beings (such as promotion of the 'corporate interests') are more destructive than others!

ECOLOGICAL HUMANISM

Ecological humanism, humanistic environmentalism or anthropo-centrism sets out to change social practices which have an adverse effect on the environment because these practices would eventually give rise to adverse effect on human interests. In other words, *ecological humanism insists on the proper maintenance of environment for the sake of human benefit.*

> What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?
>
> Henry David Thoreau (1817-62)

It may be recalled that romantic poets of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe had realized the ill effects of rapid industrialization. They demanded the re-establishment of links between society and the natural world which was the source of moral and aesthetic value. They were inspired by Rousseau's call for 'Return to Nature' and insisted on restoring unity between humanity and nature which had been broken down by industrialization. These poets (like Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth) may be regarded as forerunners of modern ecological humanism.

In contemporary world, ecological humanism is founded on the general premises of humanism. It postulates that the world has been made for human

beings and that human beings are not only the source but the measure of all value. Degradation of environment should be stopped because it involves a huge loss to humanity. For example, opponents of deforestation argue that valuable genetic material for new medicines is being lost; that trees which absorb carbon dioxide and help reduce global warming are being cut; that indigenous tribes are being wiped out; that soil erosion silts up rivers and causes floods; and that the refreshing and delightful beauty of nature is being destroyed. These arguments against deforestation are obviously informed by the concern for human welfare. Eco-centrism advocates the preservation of forests as an end-in-itself, *i.e.* for its instrinsic value. On the other hand, ecological humanism defends the preservation of forests (and other parts of nature) for their instrumental value, *i.e.* for their usefulness to human beings.

Intrinsic and Instrumental Values

When something is desired, aimed at or commended purely for its own sake, rather than as a means to anything else, *i.e.* as an end-in-itself (*e.g.* the truth, the good, the beautiful), it represents an intrinsic value. On the other hand, when something is commended because it serves as a means to another end (*e.g.* natural resources, energy and planning), it represents an instrumental value.

Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess ('The Shallow and the Deep, Long Range Ecological Movement', *Inquiry*; 1973) introduced the terms 'deep ecology' and 'shallow ecology' to distinguish between the approaches broadly associated with eco-centrism and anthropo-centrism (ecological humanism). Naess identified 'shallow ecology' with mere environmentalism which focused on preserving the environment for humanity's purposes, while genuine or 'deep ecology' was concerned with the preservation of the whole biosphere, including humanity. Ultimately, Naess thought, shallow ecology is concerned with the well-being of people in rich Western countries. He pleaded for moving away from anthropo-centric values towards 'biocentric' values which focused upon all life and the total environment.

In essence, Naess's defence of 'deep ecology' is not anti-humanist; it stands for the shift from parochial humanism (confined to the benefit of rich countries) to universal humanism (concerned with the benefit of all humanity as well as nature). Some other environmentalists have also shown concern with social justice in the realm of checking the ill effects of industrialization. Peter Luff, the Director of Action for a Global Climate Community, spoke thus at a conference on climate held in New Delhi (October 2004) :

> Our proposal is that every single person has a right to emission of carbon. It is not fair for developed countries to have reaped the economic benefits of industrialization and polluted the atmosphere in the bargain, to now expect the developing and poor countries to forego industrialization to keep carbon emissions in check.

In short, ecological humanism can serve as an ideal if two conditions are fulfilled : In the first place, its scope should be expanded in terms of space and

time. In other words, we should feel concerned not only with our local problems (like pollution of a nearby river causing decline of property value), but think of global impact of any symptom of environmental degradation; and we should feel concerned not only with the plight of the present generation but think of the predicament of future generations that will result from the present-day environmental degradation. Secondly, we should develop a genuine partnership with nature, and not treat it merely as an instrument of human satisfaction. This requires not only an effective control on population growth (because earth has only a limited 'carrying capacity'), but also calls for curbing our levels of consumption. As Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher, has significantly observed:

> Earth has enough resources to satisfy everybody's need but not their greed.

ECO-FEMINISM

Feminism is primarily concerned with putting an end to exploitation and subordination of women in society. Eco-feminism draws a parallel between women and nature and tends to connect feminist outlook with environmental outlook. Eco-feminists see a direct link between gender inequality and domination of nature by man. They project the role of women as a counterpart of the 'mother earth'. They also believe that women should play an active role in the environmental movement.

Eco-feminists argue that women are closer to nature than men, by virtue of their biological roles and historically subordinate position. Men have not only dominated over women but also over nature in order to satisfy their needs. So the concept of patriarchy (male domination over society) should be expanded to include the concept of male domination over nature. In contemporary art and culture, nature is frequently represented as female. *Women should include the issue of liberation of nature in the agenda of their own liberation.* They will find it easier to participate in the grassroot and direct wing of the environmental movement. However, some feminists criticize this view as departure from the main focus of their movement. They argue that woman should concentrate on their own liberation instead of spending some part of their energy on the liberation of 'mother earth'.

ECO-SOCIALISM

Eco-socialists are those socialists who tend to fuse socialist beliefs with an ecological outlook. They concede that socialism alone cannot provide sufficient ideological vision for a post-capitalist society. Drawing upon many of the insights of the environmentalist movement, eco-socialism offers a programme of abolishing inequality and ending human exploitation of nature. Many eco-socialists have raised the awareness of environmentalists about specific features of contemporary society such as the operations of the labour process in advanced capitalism. They have pleaded for reducing the workload of workers in a post-industrial world to enable them to pursue their own self-expression and development.

Many socialists criticize eco-socialists for their departure from the mainstream ideology of socialism. Many environmentalists also criticize them for giving priority to liberation of man over liberation of nature. However, it is not fair to criticize those who try to combine one salutary goal with another equally salutary goal.

It is futile to seek solutions to environmental disturbances without considering them from a broad perspective that encompasses the factors underlying world poverty and inequities within and among nations.

Gro Brundtland (1989)

Q. 1. What do you understand by ecological perspective? Outline the chief concerns of eco-philosophy.

2. Write short, critical notes on : (*a*) Sustainable Development ; (*b*) Eco-centrism; and (*c*) Ecological Humanism.

18

Gandhian Perspective

I
WHAT IS GANDHISM ?

Gandhism derives its name from that of Mahatma Gandhi (M.K. Gandhi) (1869--1948), Indian social philosopher and activist. His social and political thought is compendiously described as Gandhism. He did not write any treatise on his philosophy. His thought is scattered in a large number of notes and pamphlets as well as his *Autobiography (My Experiments With Truth* ; 1929). He even denied the existence of 'Gandhism'. But as the time rolled on, it revealed the immense possibilities of application of Gandhian principles to various social, economic and political situations, and their relevance is steadily increasing. It proved that Gandhian way of thinking has not only its distinct identity, but it embodies a full-fledged worldview. That is precisely the basis of Gandhism.

Worldview

Worldview refers to a system of thought which explains the present status of world society, tries to find solution to its problems, and determines the way to shape its future.

POLITICS AND ETHICS

As a moral philosopher, Gandhi treated ethics as the guiding star of all human behaviour, including politics. Gandhi's ethics was based in moral teachings of all religions, although he paid special attention to time-honoured Hindu religion *(sanatana dharma)*. He expressed his firm faith in the *spiritualization of politics.* This meant that if politics was to be a blessing, and not a curse to mankind, it should be informed by the highest ethical and spiritual principles. In other words, politics should be guided by high moral standards, and not by expediency.

Gandhi believed in purity of means as well as ends. In his view, only right means should be adopted for the pursuit of right ends. He strongly refuted the idea

that 'end justifies the means' or that 'if a noble end is achieved by adopting ignoble means, their use would be excused'. As Gandhi himself observed :

> They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end... Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception
>
> *(Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

Gandhi was convinced that if we take care of our means, end will take care of itself. Means and ends may be compared to the seed and the tree respectively. The nature of tree is determined by the nature of seed. Only the right type of seed will grow into the right type of tree. As you sow, so shall you reap. *He that soweth vice shalt not reap virtue.* Again, means and end may be compared to the action *(karma)* and its consequence *(phala).* Man has full control over his action, and not over its consequences. That is the famous teaching of *Bhagwad-Gita*—Hindu scared book.

Means and ends are the two sides of the same coin. They cannot be separated. Immoral means cannot be used to achieve moral ends. If used, they will vitiate the end itself. Wrong way can never lead to a right destination. The authority founded on fear and coercion cannot inspire love and respect among people. Gandhi adopted the path of *satyagraha* (reliance on the force of truth) for achieving the goal of *swaraj* (independence from the foreign rule) because this path was as sacred as its destination. *Satyagraha* involved the practice of *ahimsa* (non-violence) which embodied the right course of action. So Gandhi declared : "For me, *ahimsa* comes before *swaraj."*

For Gandhi, the terms 'spiritual', 'religious' and 'moral or ethical' conveyed the same idea. They taught man to abstain from vice and follow the path of virtue. In Gandhi's view, the essence of all religions was identical. God of Hindus was not different from God of Muslims or God of Christians. *All religions taught piety and charity toward fellow-beings.* No religion was superior or inferior to any other religion. Religious tolerance was the keynote of social harmony. Gandhi's notion of religion was aptly expressed in his own words:

> By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker
>
> *(The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi,*
> compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao ; 1945).

For Gandhi, adherence to religion was the part of his pursuit of truth. This very pursuit induced him to participate in politics. He believed that politics bereft of religion was nothing short of a death trap which kills the soul. So Gandhi wrote in his *Autobiography:*

> ...my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

In short, *politics and ethics were inseparable in Gandhian system of thought.*

TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

Devotion to truth is the essence of Gandhism. But how to discover truth? It is as difficult as finding God Himself. In Gandhi's view, God and truth are inseparable. Devotion to God can be carried out through devotion to His creation, particularly through the service to the down-trodden. As Gandhi wrote *in Harijan* (1939) :

> I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the heart of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God, through service of these millions.

Non-violence is also the part of pursuit of truth. Non-violence or non-injury *(ahimsa)* literally means : abstention from violence in one's behaviour toward other living beings. This represents only the negative side of non-violence. On positive side, it implies love of all. We should extend our love not only to those who love us, but also to those who hate us. In Gandhi's own words :

> It is non-violence only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the hater is the most difficult of all. But by the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to do it
>
> *(Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

In Gandhi's view, even the intention to harm somebody or wishing him ill is a form of violence which should be eschewed. Hatred or malice to anyone is also violence. Acquiring material things beyond one's immediate need is also a form of violence because thereby we deprive others of their share. Even the acts of spreading atmospheric pollution and damaging public health amount to violence. Thus *the principle of non-violence embraces all rules of good citizenship and human decency.*

When it comes to confrontation with injustice, non-violence does not imply showing weakness. Non-violence is not the resort of the weak; it is the power of the strong—of course, his moral power. This power comes from the firm adherence to truth. When one fights for a just cause, and shows firm faith in truth, it results in the 'change of heart' of the mighty opponent and makes him bend. In short, *non-violence is the art of gaining victory over physical force by spiritual force.* Non-violence is the method of self-purification. Practitioner of non-violence gains ample moral power to defeat the forces of untruth.

Gandhi's technique of struggle against the mighty British Empire was throughout based on the principle of non-violence *(ahimsa)*. His method of civil disobedience and *satyagraha* (reliance on the force of truth) were strongly based in non-violence. His doctrines of trusteeship and the vision of a classless society are also the manifestation of his adherence to truth and non-violence.

> *Ahimsa* is the highest ideal. It is meant for the brave, never for the cowardly.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

II
CONCEPT OF COEXISTENCE

Gandhian principle of non-violence is the key to his philosophy of coexistence. In common parlance, coexistence refers to an attitude of tolerance towards each other. It does not mean absence of differences of opinion, but being ready to live peacefully in spite of our differences. Gandhi asserted that differences of opinion should never mean hostility. He particularly commended the principle of mutual toleration. As he observed :

> The golden rule of conduct...is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall see Truth in fragment and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everybody's freedom of conscience
> (*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

Ideally, coexistence implies that our existence should in no way come in the way of others. That is precisely the spirit behind non-violence. As Gandhi tried to elucidate :

> Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives (*ibid.*).

Non-violence is not a matter of outward behaviour only. If our heart is not pure and our mind is not devoted to non-violence, we cannot follow the principle in the real sense of the term. Non-violence gives us courage to fight against social injustice wherever we find it. Gandhi believed that no man could be actively non-violent unless he would rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred. Non-violence should not only be the part of our behaviour but the part of our character. As Gandhi asserted :

> Non-violence to be a potent force must begin with the mind. Non-violence of the mere body without the cooperation of the mind is non-violence of the weak or the cowardly, and has therefore no potency. If we bear malice and hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead to our destruction. For abstention from mere bodily violence not to be injurious, it is at least necessary not to entertain hatred if we cannot generate active love (*ibid.*).

If a man has no power or no courage to retaliate, and still pretends to be non-violent, it would be a fake non-violence. Genuine non-violence implies deliberate abstension from retaliation. As Gandhi argued :

> Non-violence presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious, deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. But vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. Forgiveness is higher

still. Vengeance too is weakness. The desire for vengeance comes out of fear of harm, imaginary or real. A man who fears no one on earth would consider it troublesome even to summon up anger against one who is vainly trying to injure him (*ibid.*).

In Gandhi's view non-violence and cowardice go ill together. A person who carries arms for his defence does so out of fear, if not out of cowardice. True non-violence is impossible without having unadulterated fearlessness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. Non-violence taught a person to be brave, and not to escape from his duty. Gandhi made it quite clear:

> It was manly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of the sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrong-doer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty and, in order to save one's skin, to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrong-doer. I could see my way of delivering *ahimsa* to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death (*ibid.*).

Gandhian principle of non-violence did not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, he would prefer violence to cowardice. Preaching non-violence to a coward was like tempting a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Gandhi saw no difficulty in demonstrating the superiority of non-violence to those who were trained in the school of violence. On the other hand, non-violence could not be taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance.

Finally, as a principle of coexistence, non-violence necessitates abstension from exploitation in any form. How can a person who respects others, who dares even to love his enemy, think of exploiting others to serve his self-interest? Gandhian principle of non-violence exhorts us not only to live peaceably with other human beings, but also with the nature. Non-violence toward the nature is consistent with the Gandhian principle of minimization of our physical wants. When we abstain from damaging the nature, this will enable the nature to satisfy minimum needs of larger human population and thereby further strengthen the spirit of coexistence.

III
CONCEPT OF *SWARAJ*

NATURE OF THE STATE

Gandhi was a champion of non-violence or *ahimsa* which deprecates all types of coercion. He believed that the state was a manifestation of power and law which were based on coercion. State is inclined to impose its own will on individuals with the help of an elaborate machinery of police force, law-courts, prisons and military power. It suppresses an individual's individuality as it tries to cast all

individuals into a uniform mould. It destroys his sense of self-reliance and stunts his personality. It deprives him of his freedom and obstructs the progress of human society.

Gandhi observed that modern state was more powerful than ancient and medieval states as it was more organized and more centralized. Power of the state was concentrated in the hands of the few who did not hesitate to misuse it. In Gandhi's view, individual is endowed with soul, but the state is a soulless machine. State's acts are devoid of human sensitivity. State goes by rules and regulations. Those who enforce these rules do not feel any moral responsibility.

Indeed Gandhi condemned political power on moral ground, and not on historical or economic grounds. He was convinced that if non-violence or *ahimsa* could be adopted as a universal principle of human behaviour, political power as well as the state would become redundant. The result would be an 'enlightened anarchy'. So Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1931):

> To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a State everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least.

In this respect Gandhi was a follower of Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) who upheld pacific anarchism. Tolstoy was inspired by his faith in Christianity; Gandhi found the basis of this philosophy through his faith in Hinduism *(sanatana dharma)*, although he taught equal respect for all religions. Both Tolstoy and Gandhi accorded precedence to spiritual bliss over material satisfaction. Both attacked private property as it enabled the few to lead a luxurious life by exploiting the labour of large numbers. Gandhi did not agree with other anarchists like P.J. Proudhon (1809-65), Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76) and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) who regarded religion as a hindrance to human development.

Pacific Anarchism

Pacific anarchism refers to a political outlook which stands for abolition of the state on moral grounds in a peaceful manner. Its chief exponent, Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian writer, was inspired by 'the law of love', as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount (delivered by the Christ himself). This made him denounce the state as 'organized violence' which tried to fight one evil (oppression of the vulnerable) by another evil (the use of police and the military force). He argued that private property enables the few to lead a luxurious life by exploiting others' labour. Both of them should be abolished for the regeneration of humanity.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian social philosopher, was inspired by these ideals in developing his philosophy of 'non-violence'.

LIMITS OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION

Gandhi recognized severe limits of political obligation, as his principle of 'civil disobedience' indicates. Civil disobedience implies an act of deliberate disobedience to an unjust authority and breaking an unjust law. The duty of civil disobedience to an unjust law is the counterpart of the duty of civil obedience to a just law. Civil disobedience may be resorted to as a protest against an unjust policy of government or in order to draw attention of the government to a demand for political reform.

Political Obligation

Political obligation refers to the set of conditions which determine as to how far, when and why an individual is obliged to obey law and the commands of political authority. This may be accompanied by such duties as the payment of taxes, participation in voting, jury service and military duty, etc. which are necessary for the maintenance of political institutions.

The term 'civil disobedience' was originally coined by an American writer—Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) who published an essay in 1848 to explain why he had refused to pay taxes to the state for several years for which he had to undergo imprisonment. Thoreau argued that people must register their protest against any injustice perpetrated by their own government. Besides, Harold J. Laski has cited the case of 'conscientious objectors' to military service during the period of the First World War (1914-18), who had to undergo punishment for refusing to render military service as they believed in peaceful solution of all human disputes.

Mahatma Gandhi sought to combine the principle of civil disobedience with his principle of non-violent struggle and *satyagraha* (the principle of reliance on the force of truth) during India's struggle for independence. Gandhi set a practical example of civil disobedience when he led the march to the seashore in 1930 to defy the ban on making salt by the Indians. This ban was imposed by the British colonial rulers which was thought to be unjust by Gandhi and his followers. Gandhi firmly believed that civil disobedience was based on a profound respect for law in general; only unjust law should be broken— that too when all methods of persuasion and petition for withdrawal of such law had been tried and had failed. The act of civil disobedience should be performed non-violently and in full public view; and penalties entailed by this act should be accepted willingly.

It is again important that the true object of civil obedience is 'change of heart' of the authorities concerned. This should be resorted to only against a tyrannical regime, foreign rule or unjust government. If a government generally maintains the citizens' rights and can be influenced through democratic means, resort to civil disobedience will not be necessary. Finally, civil disobedience should not be resorted to for pressing the demands of any particular section against the general or public interest.

NATURE OF *SWARAJ*

Gandhi's concept of *swaraj* confirms his firm commitment to moral individualism. The term *'swaraj'* literally means 'self-rule', 'self-government', 'self determination' or 'independence'. This term became popular during India's struggle for independence. Gandhi sought to expand its meaning and scope.

Moral Individualism

Moral individualism refers to a philosophical principle which regards individual as an end-in-itself, endowed with 'dignity'. Accordingly, no human being can be treated as a means to serve an end which lies beyond his conscious existence; no worldly thing can be treated as more valuable than a human being; and no human being can accept an obligation except at his own free will.

Gandhi argued that *swaraj* did not simply mean political independence from the foreign rule; it also implied the idea of cultural and moral independence. If a country is politically independent but culturally dependent on others for choosing its course of action, it would be devoid *of swaraj*. *Swaraj* does not close the doors of learning from others, but it requires confidence in one's own potential and decisions. Gandhi thought of *swaraj* as a system in which all people will have a natural affinity with their country and they will readily collaborate in the task of nation-building.

> I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

Swaraj or self-government rules out people's dependence on government. This applies even to their own government. Thus Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1925) :

> Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. *Swaraj* government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life.

Gandhi's concept of *swaraj* also exemplifies his vision of a true democracy. Under this system, people will not merely have the right to elect their representatives, but they will become capable of checking any abuse of authority. As Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1925) :

> Real *swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

For Gandhi, the idea of *swaraj* was not confined to the political goal of

securing independence from foreign yoke. It also implied the moral regeneration of the individual himself—the process of 'self-control', 'self-discipline' and 'self-purification' which must continue even after the independence. As Gandhi himself observed :

> I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange 'king log for king stork'. Hence for me the movement of *swaraj* is a movement of self-purification
>
> *(Selections from Gandhi by* Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

Gandhi sought to demonstrate that individual self-government, *i.e.* self-control or self-mastery, was as important as political self-government itself. Thus he wrote in his Authobiography *(My Experiments With Truth,* 1929):

> Self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it, is not worth the name. I have therefore endeavoured to show both in word and deed that political self-government—that is self-government for a large number of men and women—is no better than individual self-government, and therefore, it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule.

As a votary of purity of means as well as ends, Gandhi tries to assert that we must rely on non-violence or *ahimsa* for the attainment of political self-government as well as individual self-government.

IV
DOCTRINE OF TRUSTEESHIP

Broadly speaking, Gandhi believed in simple living at the level of production as well as consumption. He gave primacy to simple technology over heavy industries. Simple technology had the capacity of mass employment, whereas advanced technology would create vast unemployment, particularly in a country like India, and would promote consumerism with all its ill effects. Gandhi preferred 'production by the masses' over 'mass production' by heavy machinery. However, he realized that it was not feasible to switch over to the new system abruptly.

Wider use of simple technology could be kept in mind in the course of future expansion. The existing system of production may be allowed to continue with necessary changes in the attitude of the owners of means of production. For the transformation of their attitude, Gandhi enunciated his doctrine of trusteeship.

Gandhian doctrine of trusteeship is addressed to the conscience of the rich and resourceful members of society, particularly landlords and capitalists. It urges them not to consider themselves as the sole proprietors of their possessions, but only 'trustees' of a gift bestowed upon them by God for the service of humanity.

This view is in consonance with the basic philosophy of Gandhi. His principle of non-possession *(aparigraha)* implies that worldly possessions make you morally deprave. Hence one should not take more than his immediate needs. To maintain one's moral strength, material things should be used with a spirit of renunciation.

Gandhian principle of non-stealing *(asteya)* implies that amassing of wealth, or even the possession of more than one's immediate needs amounts to theft because it is meant to fulfil others' needs. Any attempt to satisfy one's greed means theft. It reminds us of nineteenth-century French philosopher, P.J. Proudhon's famous dictum : "Property is theft".

However, Gandhi does not favour overthrowing the existing economic system. This system has become oppressive because of the moral decline. If the organizers of agriculture and industry could be persuaded to act as public servants, they will win wide public respect instead of the existing hatred. The feeling of class conflict will be replaced by the sentiment of class cooperation. Gandhi wants 'change of heart' of the rich and resourceful persons to enable the society to have full benefit of their talents and efforts without suffering injustice caused by the exploitation of the poor by the rich. As Gandhi wrote in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (1934) :

> What is needed is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer.

Gandhi realized that this was by no means an easy task. As he himself conceded in *The Modern Review* (1935):

> You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method.

Moral regeneration at any stage is really difficult. We need a constant inspiration from Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ, or Mahatma Gandhi to follow this path. Every step in this direction will give us more enlightenment, peace of mind and genuine happiness.

Critics point out that the vision of 'change of heart' of the rich is a fascinating idea, but it is hardly realizable in actual practice!

V
VISION OF A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

Gandhi's faith in human equality made him a strong votary of a classless society. He realized that the division of labour among different individuals was inevitable. However, class division of society was not directly related to division of labour. It was the product of a condition in which one type of labour, *i.e.* physical labour was

regarded as inferior to another type of labour, *i.e.* mental labour or mere leisure. Gandhi sought to create a sense of equality among people by making 'bread labour' compulsory for all.

The gospel of 'bread labour' expected everybody to do physical labour toward production, at least to compensate for the bread that he consumes. Bread is symbolic of various items of one's physical consumption. When everybody does physical labour, apart from the performance of other functions suited to his aptitude and qualifications, nobody will look down upon physical labour. This will create a sense of 'dignity of labour' throughout society. This in turn will promote a sense of equality among people transcending the prevailing division of labour. This would even create a sense of equality between the rich and the poor. As Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* (1935) :

> If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of overpopulation, no disease and no misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love for the common good. There will be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable...
>
> If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat, let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the productions of his labour, improve his health, and discover that many things he took were superfluities.

In short, the principle of bread labour is designed to promote three things : (*a*) Simple living among all citizens; (*b*) Dignity of labour; and (*c*) A sense of equality transcending the prevailing division of labour. Originally caste symbolized the division of labour which strayed on to division of society into high and low ranks. The principle of bread labour would serve to obliterate this ranking. This would even create equality between the rich and the poor. As Gandhi wrote in *From Yervada Mandir* (1945) :

> There is a worldwide conflict between capital and labour, and the poor envy the rich. If all worked for their bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated; the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property, and would use it mainly in the public interest.

Gandhi also stood against discrimination among human beings on the grounds of gender and faith. In other words, he championed equality between men and women as also between the adherents of different religions. In short, he wished to create a classless society by transforming the attitude of people toward the sources of discrimination in society. He insisted on moral regeneration of society for which adherence to truth and non-violence was indispensable. Gandhian principle of equality of all religions was expressed in the following statement :

> Temples or mosques or churches...I make no distinction between these different abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are an

answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen

(*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao ; 1945).

Gandhi strongly-defended equality between man and women. As he wrote :

My opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problems must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same! The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help...But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex...But the seers among men have recognized her equal status

(*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

Above all, Gandhian principle *of Ahimsa* (non-violence) is also conducive to the creation of a classless society. When a person avows not to harm anybody, not to cause injury to anybody and not to hurt anybody's feeling, what else is left for the realization of a classless society? Thus *the vision of a classless society runs throughout Gandhian thought and philosophy.*

VI
CONCEPT OF *SARVODAYA*

MEANING OF *SARVODAYA*

The term *'sarvodaya'* may be rendered as 'uplift of all', 'rise of all' or 'awakening of all'. All the meanings of this term closely correspond to each other. In a society where only the few are endowed with knowledge, power, prestige and wealth, and a very large numbers are languishing, *sarvodaya* wants them to rise above. But since it believes in uplift of all, it does not envisage a conflict between the high and the low, between the rich and the poor. As a votary of purity of means as well as end, Gandhi was convinced that violent means cannot be used to achieve a non-violent end.

The idea behind *sarvodaya* was inspired by John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (1860). Gandhi came across this work in the midst of passive resistance against the racist regime of South Africa. This contained a message of uplift of the last man or the most neglected lot. He was so impressed by this work that he published its summary in his Gujarati articles under the title *of Sarvodaya.* Ruskin's teachings are very close to Gandhian philosophy. Ruskin rejected the cult of machinery and consumerism as well as the idea of economic man and mercantile economy. Instead, he advocated simple technology, manual labour, communal enterprise and measurement of value in terms of quality of life. Gandhi relied on these teachings to sharpen his own thinking on various issues of social reform.

The ideal of *sarvodaya* is concerned with 'welfare of all', yet it implies special concern with the welfare of the down-trodden or 'the most disadvantaged'. This principle should be followed in individual action as well as in making public

decisions. This is evident from Gandhi's famous talisman:

> I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test:
> Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to *Swaraj* for hungry and spiritually starving millions?
> Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

Literally, *sarvodaya* aims at the good of one and all, of the high and the low, of the strong and the weak, of the brilliant as well as the dull. A question is sometimes raised that concern with uplift of the low, the weak and the dull is understandable, but why shall we show equal concern with the uplift of the high, the strong and the brilliant? This point was adequately clarified by Vinoba Bhave (1895-1982), outstanding Gandhian, in *Harijan* (1948). Vinoba maintained that in this unhappy world of ours everyone needs to be uplifted, because everyone of us is fallen. The rich are fallen long since, and the poor have never risen at all. The result is that both need to be uplifted. The rich are fallen morally and spiritually; their wealth rests upon exploitation of others, and therefore upon untruth and violence. By voluntarily surrendering their superfluous wealth they will rise spiritually. In this way *sarvodaya* is intended to uplift the poor materially and to uplift the rich spiritually. In this sense, philosophy *of sarvodaya* is different from other ideologies which largely focus on material welfare, and that too of a specified section of population like 'greatest happiness of the greatest number', 'emancipation of the working class', etc.

SARVODAYA AND UTILITARIANISM

Gandhian concept of *Sarvodaya* rejects the utilitarian doctrine of the 'greatest good of the greatest number' in favour of the 'greatest good all'. As Gandhi asserted :

> I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent the interest of 49 per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice (cited in *The Diary of Mahadev Desai* ; 1953).

The theory of utilitarianism, as founded by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), was based on the calculation of pleasure and pain to be derived from contending policy proposals. It defined 'good' or 'happiness' as the balance of pleasure over pain. Any proposal that would ensure the greatest good or the greatest happiness of the greatest number in this sense would be given preference over all other proposals. Here the calculation of 'good' was confined to the consideration of physical pleasure and pain; there was no scope of moral or spiritual consideration in this context. John Stuart Mill (1806-73), outstanding English utilitarian, sought to focus on qualitative differences between different types of pleasures. Mill maintained that man does not run after physical pleasures

only, but the development of his moral, intellectual and artistic faculties is also necessary. The pleasure enjoyed by man's higher faculties is always superior to the mere sensuous pleasure.

In any case, utilitarian philosophy could not rise above the concept of material welfare of human beings. It did not enter the sphere of spiritual welfare of those who are materially well off. On the other hand, the principle of *sarvodaya* seeks to secure the spiritual as well as material welfare of humanity.

SARVODAYA AND SOCIALISM

Socialism stands for an ideology which seeks to replace capitalism by placing the major means of production under social ownership and control. Its chief goal is to secure emancipation of the working classes from capitalist exploitation. It is primarily concerned with material welfare of people. Of the two major varieties of socialism, Marxism seeks to achieve its goal through class struggle, *i.e.* the struggle of the working class against capitalist class, resulting in violent, revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. The second variety, *viz.* democratic socialism seeks to achieve its goal by mobilizing public opinion in its favour, winning electoral majority and then implementing socialist policy through democratic means.

Sarvodaya is different from socialism in many respects. In the first place, *sarvodaya* is not concerned merely with material welfare; it embraces spiritual welfare as well. Secondly, it does not seek to replace capitalism forthwith by placing major means of production under social ownership and control. It neither supports a violent revolution nor democratic propaganda to achieve its goal. Instead, it relies on moral transformation by seeking 'change of heart' of the existing land-owners and capitalists so that they would treat themselves as trustees of the property bestowed upon them by the Creator of the Universe, and use it for the service of humanity.

In the third place, *sarvodaya* does not subscribe to the theory of class conflict. It shows the goal where the interests of all classes would converge, and seeks 'class cooperation' towards the achievement of that goal. Its natural corollary is that it does not profess the emancipation of working class only. It insists on spiritual emancipation of the rich and material emancipation of the poor in order to restore a moral balance in society. Finally, whereas socialism seeks to maximize production by making labour compulsory for everyone and stepping up technological development, *sarvodaya* offers a different prescription. *Sarvodaya* prescribes 'bread labour' for everyone to overcome the problem of scarcity. In other words, everybody will have to do physical labour toward material production for society, at least to compensate for the bread that he consumes. This step will not only increase social production but also establish 'dignity of labour'. As regards the development of technology, *sarvodaya* recommends the use of simple technology so as to create work for the teeming millions. Instead of 'mass production' by the machines, *sarvodaya* wants 'production by the masses'.

Ultimate goal of socialism is expressed in the formula: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.' *Sarvodaya* seeks to modify this rule.

It does recommend universalization of labour. But it professes minimization of needs which could be easily satisfied. Socialism does not seek to curb the levels of consumption, in the hope that abundance of goods and services can be created in society. On the contrary, *sarvodaya* holds that human desires can never be fully satisfied; control of one's desires and the spirit of contentment are the only solution to the problem of satisfaction of human needs.

SARVODAYA AND DEMOCRACY

In common parlance, democracy in practice means the rule of majority. On the other hand, the spirit of *sarvodaya* tends to pay equal importance to everyone in society. This calls for redefining the essence of democracy. Writing in *Young India* (1932), Gandhi observed :

> The rule of majority has a narrow application, *i.e.* one should yield to majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.

Gandhi insisted that a democratic state should act strictly according to public opinion (not simply according to majority opinion). This is essential for maintaining democratic discipline. Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing on earth. On the contrary, if a democracy is prejudiced, ignorant and superstitious, it will land itself in chaos and will be on its way to self-destruction. A decadent democracy would tend to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. Individual freedom, which is the crux of democracy, can be maintained only through unadulterated non-violence. Tolerance is the key to democratic discipline. As Gandhi wrote earlier in *Young India* (1921):

> If we want to cultivate true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.

Apart from considering the procedural aspect of democracy, Gandhi also dwelled on the substantive aspect of democracy in consonance with his philosophy of *sarvodaya.* Here again he highlights the importance of non-violence. As he wrote in *Harijan* (1940) :.

> My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak.

This also distinguishes *sarvodaya* from the welfare state. Broadly speaking, welfare state refers to a democratic state which creates the network of common social services as well as certain services for the poor by means of taxation of the rich. It is characterized by what Gandhi termed 'patronizing regard for the weak'. *Sarvodaya,* on the other hand, recognizes equal dignity of the poor and the rich. Instead of heavy taxation of the rich against their wishes, *sarvodaya* seeks to persuade them to offer their surplus wealth willingly and voluntarily for the

service of humanity.

CONCLUSION

Commitment to the common good is the essence of Gandhian philosophy. *Gandhi saw India's independence as an opportunity 'to wipe every tear from every eye'.* He wished to transform the destiny of India at a critical juncture through moral regeneration. It was a time when India was groaning under an oppressive foreign rule, abject poverty, vast social and economic inequalities. Further, it was also in the grip of communal tension and hatred. Gandhi preached the gospel of spiritualism, *ahimsa* (non-violence), renunciation (non-possession), dignity of labour and moral courage, etc. for the uplift of man as well as society. His doctrine of trusteeship, his vision of a classless society and his concept of *sarvodaya* (uplift of all) hold the key to his idea of the common good.

> Every individual must have fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from his talents. He is part of the nation or say, the social structure surrounding him. Therefore he can use his talents not for self but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

VII
GANDHIAN MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

Gandhi was primarily a moral philosopher. He did not advance any specific theory of development. But the ideas expressed by him on different occasions for the guidance of mankind contain some insights concerning this issue.

Gandhi gave precedence to morality over politics. He saw politics as an instrument of achieving moral goals. His role in the independence movement of India was aimed at securing moral regeneration of India.

Gandhi never wanted India to emulate the ways of the Western civilization. He firmly held that the Western civilization sought to promote consumerism which would lead us to moral decline. Moral regeneration calls for self-control and the spirit of renunciation. Moral strength could not be gained through fulfilment of material needs. As Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1927) :

> I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal...I wholeheartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic.

Gandhi was opposed to any notion of development that seeks to multiply material wants and to find the means of their satisfaction. He argued that in the West people talk of improvement of quality of life in the sense of raising the

standard of living. But the key to real improvement of life of man lies in his conscience. It cannot be improved by changing his external conditions. For this, man should be induced to gain knowledge of his duties and devote himself to their fulfilment.

Gandhi taught that man should consume minimum quantity of material things which are necessary to keep him physically fit. Additional consumption would mean grabbing the rightful share of others. As a visionary he observed:

Earth has enough resources to satisfy everybody's needs but not their greed.

Gandhi warned that a greedy person causes immense harm to nature and society. He who does not control his desires creates scarcity of resources for others. Self-restraint is, therefore, not only beneficial to oneself (as the key to high moral character) but to others as well. Gandhi's principle of 'bread labour' insists that each individual should do, apart from his normal duties, physical labour toward the production of goods for his own consumption. This will not only help in meeting the needs of the teeming millions but also raise the dignity of labour.

Bread Labour

Bread labour refers to one of the Gandhian principles of good conduct. It requires every member of society to do physical labour toward production, at least to compensate for the bread that he consumes. Bread is symbolic of various items of one's physical consumption. It is believed that when everybody does physical labour, apart from his normal duties, nobody will look down upon physical labour. This practice will be conducive to the recognition of 'dignity of labour'.

Gandhi argued that in a county like India where a huge work force was available for employment, priority should be given to 'production by the masses' over 'mass production' by machines. It was also necessary to prevent the concentration of wealth. As he wrote in *Harijan* (1935):

> Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort. The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths.

Gandhi's principle of non-violence was not confined to dealing with human beings. He wanted to extend it to dealing with nature. In effect, he deprecated the actions that degrade the earth, impoverish the nature by over-exploitation of its resources and create inequity among human beings. As he argued :

> How can we be non-violent to nature, unless the ethics of non-violence becomes central to the ethos of human culture?

In the present-day society it may not be feasible to stop industrialization as Gandhi would have recommended, but Gandhian approach is being increasingly appreciated by the champions of sustainable development. They favour curbs on consumption by the rich to prevent over-exploitation of nature and to save the valuable resources not only for the vast humanity in the present-day world, but

also for the future generations.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development refers to the idea which emerged in recent decades from the debate on the protection of environment. It seeks to ensure that the benefits of development do not result in the depletion of the existing natural resources or otherwise damage the atmosphere or biosphere. This process can be prevented by curbing consumption, restraining the sources of pollution, stopping the cutting of forests and mountains and planting new trees.

VIII
GANDHISM AND MARXISM

Both Gandhi and Marx (1818-83) were deeply concerned with the plight of the down-trodden. Both anticipated the emergence of a classless and stateless society for the emancipation of mankind. It is sometimes felt that their philosophies were akin to each other. But on deeper analysis it is revealed that their differences were more pronounced than their similarities.

For Marx, division of society into classes was the outcome of ownership of the means of social production by a tiny class, leaving others to live by their labour power. Marx hoped to achieve the goal of classless society through a violent revolution in which capitalists would be overthrown and labour would become compulsory for all able-bodied persons. For Gandhi, class distinction arose from a mental outlook which regarded physical labour as inferior to mental labour. Gandhi commended restoration of 'dignity of labour' as the key of achieving a classless society.

Gandhi was a spiritualist; Marx was a materialist. Gandhi treated religion as a moralizing force; Marx dubbed religion 'the opium of the people'. Gandhi favoured simple technology; Marx relied on advanced technology as a liberating force. Gandhi attributed the division of society into classes to mental outlook based on the contempt for physical labour; Marx held the existence of private property responsible for this division. Gandhi believed in class cooperation; Marx saw class conflict as the instrument of social transformation. Gandhi enunciated the doctrine of trusteeship for resolving the conflict between the rich and the poor; Marx exhorted the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. Gandhi saw the state as a soulless machine for coercion of individuals; Marx saw it as the instrument of class domination. Gandhi hoped that when non-violence is adopted as a universal principle, society will become self-regulated and state would become redundant; Marx anticipated that after socialist revolution and the fullest development of the forces of production, 'the state will wither away'. Gandhi's vision of future society consists of self-disciplined individuals having minimum needs with a sense of moral responsibility toward social needs; Marx's vision of the future consists of a self-regulated society ruled by the principle: 'from each according to his ability, to

each according to his need'.

Comparative Study of Marxian and Gandhian Views

The Issue	*Marxian View*	*Gandhian View*
Philosophical basis	Materialism; Scientific Socialism	Spiritualism; Moral Individualism
Attitude toward Religion	Negative; an ideological instrument for the protection of private property	Positive; a moralizing force; equal respect for all religions
Attitude toward Technology	Positive; necessary for full development of the forces of production	Negative; use of heavy machines stunts moral growth and creates vast unemployment
Basis of Classes	Division of society into owners and non-owners of means of social production	Metal outlook based on contempt for physical labour
Recommended Relation between Classes	Class Conflict	Class Cooperation
Way to Achieve Classless Society	Overthrow of capitalism; Establish social ownership of means of social production; Compulsory labour	Doctrine of trusteeship: moral persuasion of capitalists to regard themselves as 'trustee' of public property; restore 'dignity of labour': universal 'bread labour' requiring everybody to do physical labour
Nature of the State	An instrument of class domination involving oppression and exploitation of the dependent class	An instrument of coercion of individuals; a soulless machine for enforcing rules and regulations without human sensitivity and a sense of moral responsibility
Way to Achieve Stateless Society	After full development of the forces of production in a classless society, the state will 'wither away'	When everybody follows the principle of non-violence (*ahimsa*) and becomes self-disciplined and self-regulated, the state will become redundant
Image of Future Society	A self-regulated society ruled by the principle: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'	A self-regulated society comprising of self- disciplined individuals having minimum needs, with a sense of moral responsibility toward social needs

Materialism

Materialism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'matter' as the essence of the universe, and treats 'consciousness' as the mere reflection of the prevailing condition of the matter.

In ethics, materialism stands for an attitude which regards material or economic gain and sensuous pleasure as the highest value and relegates all other values to the background. It is the opposite of spiritualism.

Spiritualism

Spiritualism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'spirit' or 'soul' as the essence of the universe, and treats 'matter' as the transitory forms through which 'soul' expresses itself in the course of its evolution to the goal of perfection.

In ethics, spiritualism stands for an attitude which regards only moral values as worth pursuing and relegates economic gain and sensuous pleasure to the background. In other words, it accords priority to moral values over material values. It is the opposite of materialism.

Scientific Socialism

Scientific socialism refers to a theory of socialism based on the scientific laws derived from historical analysis. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) are the chief exponents of this theory. They held that various stages of historical development are the manifestations of contradictions in material conditions which necessarily lead human society to the goal of socialism. Whereas utopian socialism regards socialism as a moral choice, scientific socialism considers it a historical necessity.

Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man.

...Our socialism or communism should, therefore, be based on non-violence and on harmonious cooperation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Amrita Bazar Patrika* ; 1934)

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught : "All land belongs to Gopal; where then is the boundary line ? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, *i.e.* the People.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Harijan* ; 1937)

IX
GANDHISM AND RAWLS'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

John Rawls (1921-2002), contemporary American philosopher, published his monumental work, *A Theory of Justice*, in 1971. It proved not only influential in the intellectual circles throughout the world but also won pride of place for the theory of justice in contemporary political philosophy. One of Rawls's principle of justice postulates that any departure from equality can be justified only when it could be proved that it would bring greatest benefit to the least advantaged. It seems as though Rawls like Gandhi was concerned with the welfare of the down-trodden, and some scholars tend to draw a parallel between the two. However, a deeper analysis will show that Gandhi and Rawls followed substantially different lines of argument although they arrived at somewhat similar conclusion.

At the outset, Rawls argued that a good society is characterized by a number of virtues. Justice is the first virtue of good society. In other words, justice is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of good society. Those who think that justice should not be allowed to come in the way of social advancement and progress run the risk of causing moral degradation of society.

Mahatma Gandhi's famous 'talisman' implies that the guiding principle of our action should be to ascertain that it would benefit the most deprived and underprivileged. What is the cause of Gandhi's so deep concern with amelioration of the condition of the poorest and the weakest persons? Why is he recommending this goal as a guide for all acts of individual as well as social policy? Is it similar to the conditions under which Rawls prescribes the principle of giving 'greatest benefit to the least advantaged'? It is important to note that Gandhi is reminding an ordinary individual or a social worker of his duty toward the underprivileged and downtrodden sections of society. It is simply a moral exhortation. On the other hand, Rawls arrived at his principles of justice by imagining a condition in which different individuals (the rational negotiators) have gathered for deliberation behind the 'veil of ignorance' to find the principles of justice. Each individual is keen to maximize his well-being (that is to serve his self-interest) but under the conditions of uncertainty about his own position, he thinks of the worst possibility, that he might discover that he is placed in 'the least advantaged position'. Since he is averse to taking any risk, he agrees to an arrangement for equal distribution of primary goods, provided any departure from this rule should be accepted only when it would bring greatest benefit to the least advantaged.

Thus in Rawls's scheme, the principle of 'greatest benefit for the least advantaged' is accepted by each individual because of the lurking fear in everybody's mind that he could be placed in the least advantaged position. In other words, this principle is adopted in pursuance of each individual's calculation of self-interest under the conditions of uncertainty. For Gandhi's individual, there is no such constraint. Each individual is motivated by the spirit of self-sacrifice for the well-being of the community; he does not isolate his personal good from

the common good, that is 'the good of all'. A comparative study of Gandhism and Rawls's theory of justice may be made with special reference to the following points : (*a*) Nature of morality; (*b*) Nature of individualism; (*c*) Status of rights and duties; (*d*) Nature of well-being; and finally, (*e*) Basis of giving greatest benefit to the least advantaged. The substance of their views on these points may be expressed in the form of the following chart.

Comparative Study of Rawls's Theory of Justice and Gandhism

The Issue	*Rawlsian View*	*Gandhian View*
Nature of Morality	Reciprocal regard for each other in society, *e.g.* maximum liberty of individual as far as compatible with similar and equal liberty of others	An absolute value requiring constant pursuit of truth and non-violence, self-discipline, self-purification and self-restraint
Nature of Individualism	Calculation of self-interest involving maximization of primary goods for oneself	Willing submission to social restraints for the well-being of whole society
Status of Rights and Duties	Rights and Duties are inter-dependent	Priority of Duty over Rights; Rights are the product of performance of Duty
Nature of Well-being	Maximization of material benefits for each individual	Fulfilment of one's minimum needs and spiritual well-being of each individual
Basis of giving greatest benefit to the least advantaged	Fear of finding oneself in the least advantaged position under the conditions of uncertainty; cost-benefit analysis without taking any risk	Moral urge for service of the poor and down-trodden; realization of one's duties as a human being

To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. We notice that the mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Hind Swaraj* ; 1908)

The very essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Young India* ; 1930)

Q. 1. "Non-violence is the art of gaining victory over physical force by spiritual force." Elucidate and comment in the light of Gandhian perspective.

2. Discuss the Gandhian concept of non-violence as the key to coexistence with nature as well as human beings.

3. "The vision of a classless society runs throughout Gandhian thought and philosophy." Elucidate and comment.

4. Evaluate *sarvodaya* as the vision of an ideal social order. Compare and contrast it with the vision of socialist society.

5. Distinguish between *sarvodaya,* welfare state and 'greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Does *sarvodaya* provide for a viable alternative to the contending ideologies?

6. Write short, critical notes on : (*a*) *Sarvodaya* and Democracy; (*b*) *Sarvodaya* as a Way of Life; (*c*) Gandhism and Marxism; and (*d*) Gandhism and Rawls's theory of justice.

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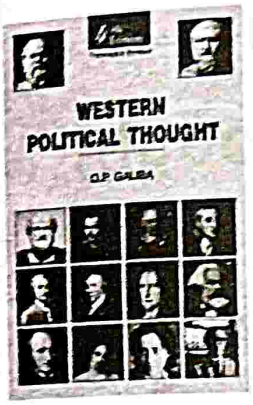
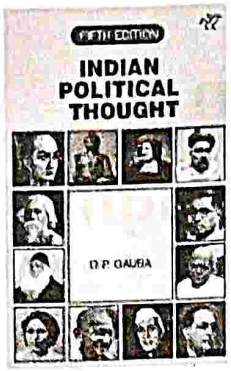


Western Political Thought

O.P. GAUBA

- Understanding Political Thought
- **Classical Tradition :** Plato; Aristotle
- **Renaissance Tradition :** Nature of the Renaissance; Machiavelli
- **Liberal Tradition :** Broad Streams of Liberalism; Hobbes; Locke; Rousseau; Rawls, Nozick
- **Conservative Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Burke
- **Utilitarian Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Bentham; Mill
- **Enlightenment Tradition :** Nature of the Enlightenment; Immanuel Kant
- **Idealist Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Hegel; Green
- **Marxist Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Marx and Engels; Lenin, Rosa Luxemberg, Mao and Gramsci; Neo-Marxism; Post-Marxism
- **Feminist Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Broad Streams of Feminist Thought
- **Communitarian Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Exponents
- **Environmentalist Tradition :** Basic Tenets; Sustainable Development; Broad Streams of Environmentalism
- **Contemporary Political Philosophers :** Hannah Arendt; Oakeshott

Written in reader-friendly style; Intricate concepts elucidated through suitable headings, sub-headings, on-the-spot definitions, explanatory diagrammes, flow charts and comparative charts



Indian Political Thought

O.P. GAUBA

- Distinctive Features of Indian Political Thought
- **Manu :** Exponent of *Dharmashastra*
- **Mahabharat :** Link between *Dharmashastra* and *Arthashastra*
- **Kautilya :** Exponent of *Arthashastra*
- **Buddhist Tradition :** Ethical foundations; Political perspective
- **Liberal Stream :** Raja Ram Mohan Roy; Naoroji; Ranade; Gokhale
- **Idealist Stream :** Swami Dayanand; Lajpat Rai; Tilak; BC Pal; Aurobindo; Savarkar
- **Humanist Stream :** Vivekanand; Tagore; M.N. Roy
- **Islamic Thought :** Syed Ahmad Khan; Iqbal; Jinnah
- **Socialist Stream :** Narendra Dev; Jayaprakash Narayan; Lohia
- **Feminist Stream :** Concern with Women's Emancipation; Pandita Ramabai
- **Exponents of Social Equality :** Jyotiba Phule; Ambedkar; Periyar
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Nehru

Main trends and relevant concepts fully elucidated. Each thinker and school of thought examined objectively and impartially.

This new edition of *Social and Political Philosophy* is intended to be a short but intimate introduction to the problems of social and political philosophy in the contemporary world. All major issues have been examined in the light of Indian as well as Western traditions of thought on the subject. Its major contents include Nature and Scope of Social and Political Philosophy, Scientific Temper and Progress (including the views of Vivekanand, Gandhi and Nehru), State and Sovereignty (including the context of Kautilya), Individual and the State (including the context of the Indian Constitution, apart from the analysis of Rights and Duties, Accountability and the Curse of Corruption). It examines various aspects of Democracy (including Deliberative Democracy), Liberty (including the views of Gandhi, Macpherson and Amartya Sen), Equality (including Ambedkar's analysis of Inequality), Justice (including the viewpoints of Rawls, Nozick and Amartya Sen), Crime and Punishment (including the debate on Capital Punishment). Then it explores the wider implications of the principles of Humanism (including the views of Kant, Vivekanand, Tagore and M.N. Roy), Secularism (including the views of Gandhi and Nehru), Multiculturalism (including the genesis of Composite Culture), Anarchism, Socialism (including the views of Narendra Dev, Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan), and Marxism (including Neo-Marxism). Finally, it introduces the rich variety of thought associated with Gender Perspective (including Liberal, Radical and Socialist streams of Feminism), Ecological Perspective (including the concept of Sustainable Development) and Gandhian Perspective (including its contrast with Marxism and Rawls's theory of Justice). All relevant issues have been examined in comparative and critical perspectives.

The matter has been presented in simple language and a reader-friendly style. Intricate concepts are elucidated through suitable headings, subheadings, flow charts, comparative charts and explanatory diagrammes. On-the-spot definitions of important terms, a brief description of historical references and some crisp quotations are given in boxes. Through this kind of work the author has exploded the myth that philosophy is an obscure subject.

Dr. O.P. Gauba studied at D.A.V. College, Dehradun and the University of Delhi. He obtained B.A. Degree in Literature and Philosophy, M.A. Degrees in Sociology and Political Science from Agra University, and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Delhi. He taught in the University of Delhi from 1967 to 2004. Presently he is fully devoted to academic writing. Apart from *Social and Political Philosophy*, his important works include *Indian Political Thought*, *Western Political Thought*, *An Introduction to Political Theory*, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, *Reading Gandhi*, *Dimensions of Social Justice*, and *Constitutionalism in a Changing Perspective*. He is also the author of a host of university-level academic books and several standard reference works in Hindi.

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